Marxism Today
August 86 85p

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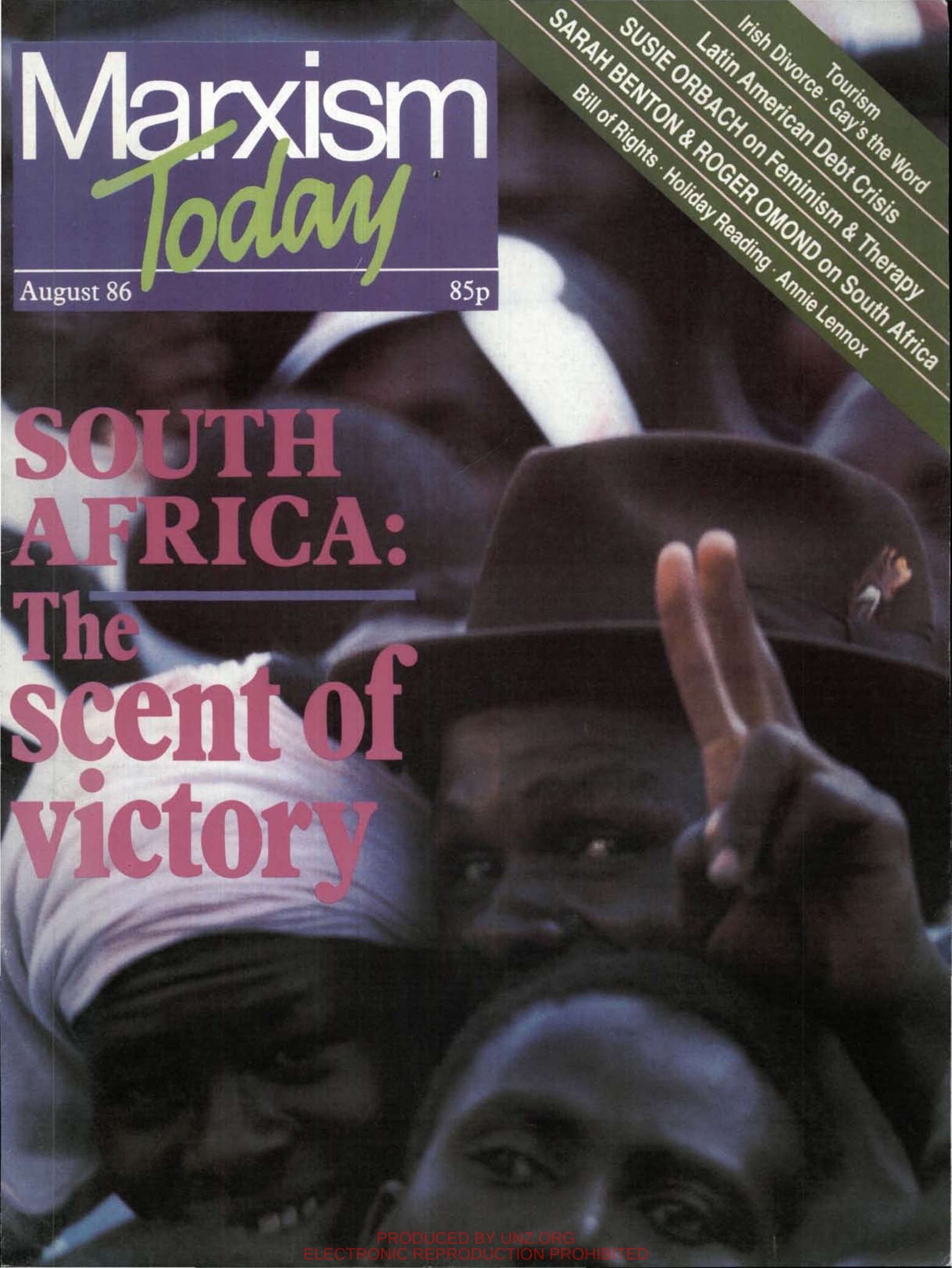
SOUTH AFRICA: The scent of victory



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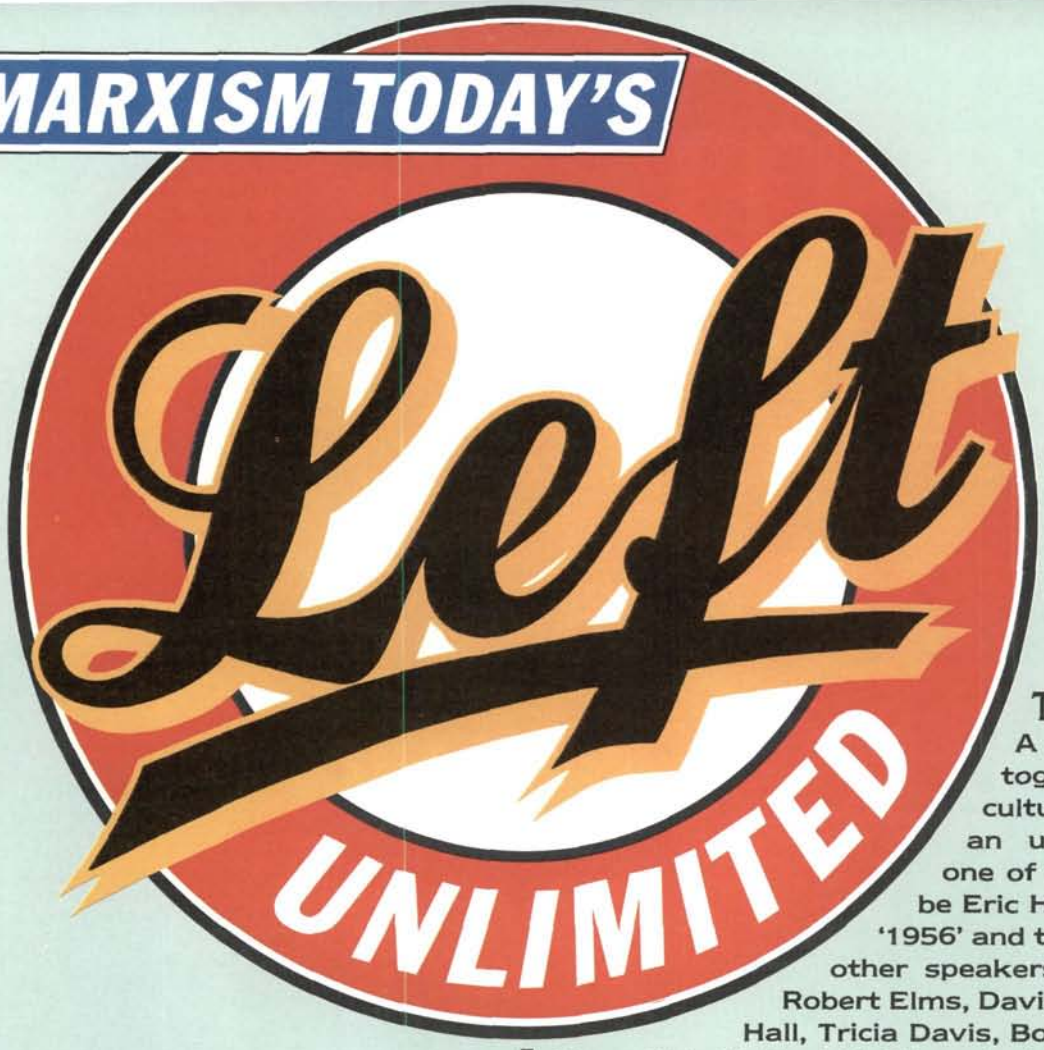

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photo: Camera Press

Ireland's Prime Minister Garret Fitzgerald and his wife Julie arrive for a community event in the village of Sandymount.

Why did it happen?

Last month, in a major political upset, 65% of those voting in the Irish Republic's referendum rejected the legalisation of divorce.

Seeking its introduction were the Divorce Action Group, an organisation mainly of separated people, the trade unions, and the women's movement, from radical feminists through to the semi-official Council for the Status of Women.

In addition, Labour, a party of poor organisation, limited funds and minimal courage put some of each scarce resource into the pro-divorce campaign. The Workers party were strongly in favour and worked hard. Especially notable was the position of Sinn Fein. Over the previous anti-abortion referendum they lined up with the rest of the Left in opposing it, but took care to see that few people knew! This time they were publicly and unequivocally in favour of progressive change. But the forces ranged against divorce carried much greater political weight.

A key factor was the psychological terror campaign spearheaded by the church. Significantly theology played little part – rather economic arguments were dominant. Constantly the church reiterated the truism that few men's wages are enough to support two families. This it underpinned with a barrage of dishonest propaganda which succeeded in persuading women that divorced wives would lose all entitlement to social welfare benefits. In vain did Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Garret Fitzgerald state repeatedly that this was not true. 'Sure, and why wouldn't he, he's a politician' was the cynical – and irrefutable – public response.

But the church only succeeded because it was able to tap into deep existing insecurities among Irish women. The divorce referendum exposed the mistrust that so many Irish women feel for men, and their fear that divorce would lead to desertion and irresponsibility on a large scale by Irish husbands. It also served as a timely reminder of the huge importance that most Irish women, other opportunities denied them, attach to the status of being married.

Also crucial was the massive unpopularity of the Fine Gael/Labour coalition government. Rocketing unemployment combined with penal levels of personal taxation, and the government's abdication of any role in tackling the economic crisis, were crudely and readily exploited by the anti-divorce lobby. This was soon visible to any traveller. Billboards in towns from Galway in the west to Dundalk just 10 miles inside the Republic were plastered with posters baldly proclaiming, 'It's work we want not divorce'.

The stances of Fine Gael, and Fianna Fail, also helped dig the reform's grave. The former officially supported divorce. However, with a political spectrum ranging roughly from SDP to Victoria Gillick, the party was badly split, with at least one cabinet minister and many TDs (MPs) campaigning strongly against, whilst those in favour of divorce presented a weak and apologetic image.

Alongside this, and of an importance that cannot be overestimated was the nakedly opportunistic behaviour of the Republic's largest party. Fianna Fail – the party that seeks to please everyone, and cannot get used to being in opposition – was officially neutral. But in practice it dominated the anti-divorce lobby, using it to give its massive party machine some pre-election exercise in producing a straightforwardly anti-government vote bonanza across the country.

What was virtually absent on all sides was any reference to the North. As the tide started to move against divorce it looks as if Garret Fitzgerald calculated it was too risky to seek support by appealing to the widespread sentiment in the Republic in favour of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, lest failure to produce a pro-divorce result could fatally damage the agreement. The result, however, was to let Fianna Fail off the hook.

Fitzgerald's failure to make Irish unity and the secularisation of the Irish state an issue meant that Fianna Fail could claim its anti-divorce behaviour would not damage the anti-partition cause. Whether a more courageous stance by the Taoiseach would have contributed to a different result will forever remain in question.

Naomi Wayne

Holiday Blues

In a press notice issued in early July, the Department of Employment drew attention to the decline in foreign tourists visiting Britain in the first quarter of 1986 compared with last year. In April 1986, 1,020,000 overseas visitors came to the UK, 15% less than in April 1985, while visitors from North America were 19% down.

Much has been made of the role of the 'Libyan terrorist crisis' in bringing about this fall in tourists but such arguments only serve to camouflage the structural dependence of tourism from overseas on the fickle fluctuations in international currency markets. Whatever short-term consequences the Libyan crisis may have had, the tourist industry has demonstrated a long-term dependence on variations in the value of the pound against other currencies.

The significance of this dependence has to be seen against the government's much vaunted hearlding of tourism as a major force in the economic regeneration of the UK. It has been variously claimed that tourism in Britain supports a total of between 1-1.5m jobs which in large part depend on

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spending by overseas visitors which reached £5,451m in 1985.

Such employment generation in the service sector is particularly significant given the decline in primary and manufacturing industry over which this government has presided since coming into office in 1979. The irony is that the government's pursuit of a 'strong pound' as a central plank in its economic strategy is likely to seriously undermine any contribution tourism might make to economic growth.

Tourism of course, is not one industry but an amalgam of many involving not only those sectors in direct receipt of visitor spending (for example, entertainment, accommodation, catering etc,) but also a range of supporting manufacturing and service enterprises. Indeed, it has been estimated that for every two jobs created as a direct result of visitor spending a further job is created elsewhere in the economy as an indirect consequence. As a result tourism penetrates the interstices of the economy and any decline in activity is not evident in any one industry alone but is dispersed throughout the industrial structure.

The major victims of any fall in tourist activity are, of course, those employed in tourist-related industries, whose position and strength is atomised as a result of their dispersal throughout a range of industries but is also seriously weakened by the nature of tourist-related employment itself. Surveys have shown that jobs in tourism are considered low status, are relatively badly paid and often part-time or temporary.

Furthermore, the level of unionisation among such workers is woefully low: a recent study of Scotland revealed that only 7% of employees interviewed in tourist-related industries were members of a trade union. These are hardly the ingredients out of which industrial militancy towards job protection and better working conditions are born.

There is no doubting the contribution that tourism can (and does) make to economic activity in the United Kingdom, nor any reason why this contribution should not be further enhanced. If this is to happen, however, a planned development strategy must replace the crude exhortatory pursuit of increasing the levels of foreign visitors.

The fostering of holidaymaking among the 39% of Britons who do *not* take holidays, for example, would not only secure a firmer economic base for the development of tourism but would also realise major social benefits for those currently deprived of holidays. A regional policy is needed to secure a wider social and geographical spread of foreign tourists, particularly to those economically weak areas beyond the dominant tourist axis of London-Stratford-Edinburgh. It is also important that the pay, working conditions and training of the workforce is improved to enhance the status and productivity of the industry.

To this end, the energetic pursuit of unionisation by the labour movement in general, and by those employed in tourist-related industries in particular, would be a major contribution to a fragile industry.

Brian Duffield

photo: Associated Press

Mrs Thatcher serves tea and cake to Americans who won free flights to London in the latest British bid to recapture tourists driven away by fears of terrorism.

Spain's Communists

The Spanish general elections of June 22 produced few surprises. The ruling Socialist party (PSOE) was returned with a slightly reduced absolute majority, while the right wing Popular Coalition, in a virtually exact replica of its 1982 results, maintained its position as the principal opposition force.

Thus, despite the disappointments of three and a half years of PSOE rule during which unemployment soared, pension reform plans were dropped in favour of defence spending, and Spain was confirmed as a member of NATO, Felipe González has won a mandate to continue with his pragmatic style of social democracy for another four years.

The PSOE did not suffer as anticipated from its barely disguised manipulation of the referendum on NATO membership in March.

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Nonetheless, the June elections produced a number of signs which suggest that the government can ill afford to be complacent. Most obviously threatening is the dramatic upsurge in support for the Social Democratic Centre party (CDS) of Adolfo Suárez, prime minister between 1977 and 1981, whose vote rose by over a million.

The CDS is likely to replace the Popular Coalition of Manuel Fraga Iribarne, the former Francoist minister, as the main national challenge to PSOE hegemony. The Poular Coalition failed to capitalise on widespread disenchantment with the Socialists, and already shows signs of damaging internal tension.

Also worrying for the PSOE is the rise in the regionalist vote, a reaction to what has been seen as the government's excessive centralism. Regional parties won seats in Valencia, Aragón, Galicia and the Canary Islands. Most significant, however, were the results in Catalonia and the Basque country. As expected, Convergència i Unió (CiU), the right-leaning Catalan grouping, did well, winning 18 seats. In the Basque country, however, the conservative Nationalist party PNV lost both votes and seats to Herri Batasuna, the political wing of ETA. This expression of popular support for the separatist struggle must be of particular concern to the government, which has shown little imagination in its approach to the Basque problem.

For the communist Left, the results were paradoxically both encouraging and disappointing. Since the nadir of 1982, when its vote collapsed and Santiago Carrillo resigned as secretary-general, the Communist party (PCE) has been struggling to rebuild under its new leader Gerardo Iglesias. Its efforts were struck a severe blow in late 1985 when Carrillo, reverting ever more to the stalinist instincts of his youth, left the PCE to set up his own party, claiming that Iglesias was jeopardising communist identity by his attempts to create an alliance of leftist groupings.

photo: Camera Press

Philipe Gonzáles: in the June election he won a mandate to continue with his pragmatic style of social democracy.

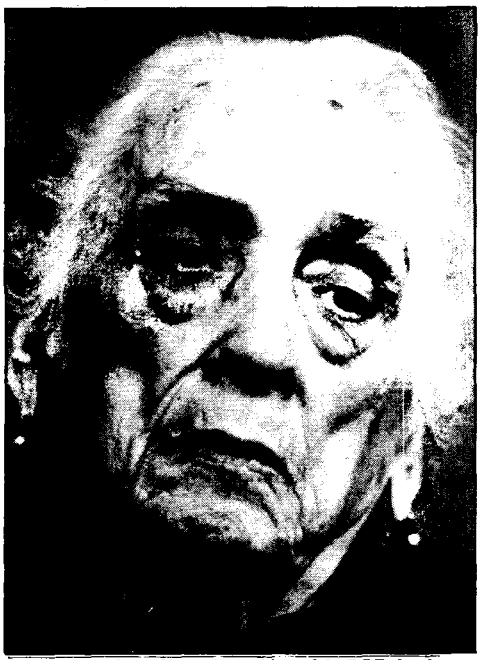

photo: Camera Press

La Passionaria: as honorary president of the PCE she plays an important role in holding the party together.

While Carrillo's defection was actually welcomed by many PCE militants, convinced that the gulf between Eurocommunist rhetoric and the lack of internal democracy between 1976 and 1982 had been responsible for the party's collapse, the veteran leader retained considerable support in Madrid, Valencia and Galicia. With the pro-Soviets Ignacio Gallego and Enrique Líster also leading their own parties, there were four claimants to communist support.

However, the referendum on Spanish membership of NATO provided an opportunity to clarify this confused situation. The Civic Platform for Withdrawal from NATO, an alliance set up by the PCE, was used to form the basis of the United Left (IU) electoral coalition of the PCE, Gallego's Spanish Peoples' Communist party (PCPE), the Progressive Federation, the tiny Humanist party and the Socialist wing of the Carlist movement. While the IU gained seven seats, compared to the PCE's four in 1982, it might have done better had it not been for Carrillo's rival group, Communist Unity.

With just 1% of the vote, Communist Unity failed to win any seats, but almost certainly denied three seats to the IU in Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona, where it split the Communist vote.

Ironically, immediately the results were known, Carrillo announced that he had written to Iglesias and Gallego suggesting the reunification of all the various Communist parties. This offer will be refused, leaving Santiago Carrillo marginal to Spanish political life after more than 50 years in the struggle. It remains with Iglesias to build upon the foundations laid in the June election.

Paul Heywood

Paper Tiger

The Gay's The Word trial had been expected to be the most important censorship trial in Britain since the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial in 1960. The withdrawal of the charges by Customs and Excise represents a major victory for the defence campaign but also deprives the defendants of the opportunity to make public the case for a lesbian and gay community bookshop.

The Gay's The Word bookshop in North London has been in existence for over 10 years and despite enormous political differences among lesbians and gay men it has attempted to serve the communities by making available as wide a range of lesbian and gay literature as possible. It has never stocked pornography but it has reflected the

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debates about sex, desire, relationships, community, representation, oppression and struggle that have concerned lesbians and gay men in this and earlier periods.

When Customs officers raided the shop in April 1984 in the ludicrously named Operation Tiger, there was no question that they were being anti-gay. The neighbouring bookshops which sell books and magazines portraying and celebrating the humiliation of women by men continued business as normal.

Eventually, Customs drew up their case on 142 titles imported from the USA and in November 1984 the bookshop's nine unpaid directors were faced with 100 criminal charges alleging conspiracy to import 'indecent' articles. The case was based on the Customs Consolidation Act of 1876 whose only test of 'indecency' is whether the 'ordinary man in the street' would consider the material in 'poor taste'. This is a much vaguer definition than that of the Obscene Publications Act and meant that it was possible to ban imported titles which could be legally published in this country.

The meaning of censorship has changed since the 'permissive' 1960s when the anti-censorship arguments were often made on grounds of 'literary merit' in ways that were abstract and often socially unspecific. In this case, the issues against censorship were defined by the lesbian and gay communities who, after much debate about their own varied sexual politics, agreed on their need for specific kinds of literature and representation.

This campaign then won support, not only in the communities themselves, but also from the NCCL, from more general anti-censorship campaigns, from booksellers organisations, from trade unions, from MPs and Euro-MPs, reflecting the growth of lesbian and gay self-organisation in public life.

The trial date had been set for October and the proscriptive climate was hardly encouraging to the defendants. In one moral panic after another, the Tories and their media allies portrayed 'family values' as being in danger from television, from sex education, from heroin pushers, from hippies, from the lesbian and gay rights policies of various Labour councils.

Despite this, Labour MPs Chris Smith and Jo Richardson sought a ministerial review of the case following a ruling of the European Court of Justice that one member state of the EEC could not ban the import of goods when its own laws did not prohibit the production and sale of such goods. Although this did not relate to the USA, Customs were clearly undermined by the increasingly public exposure of their underhand, homophobic practises.

They withdrew all charges and returned all but 19 of the seized titles to Gay's The Word. The remaining 19 titles were returned to the USA and may well be the subject of further legal dispute if, as seems likely, they are re-imported. Particularly important in this context will be the material designed to counter the spread of AIDS, much of which has been halted while this case has been pending.

What the Gay's The Word victory has shown is that the export of Reaganite, moral majority-type values is stoppable. A clearly defined, broad-based campaign can resist such advances and give us all the confidence to continue building communities and organisations based on human needs rather than Victorian values.

Bob Cant

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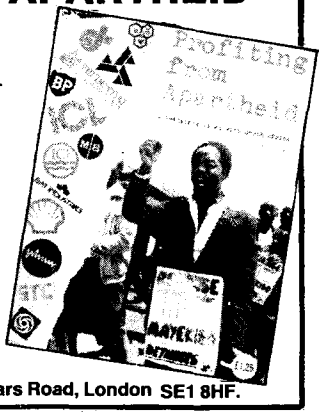

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● THE SOUTH AFRICAN CRISIS

THE APARTHEID EFFECT

Britain & South Africa

Sarah Benton

When it comes to South Africa, Thatcherism is isolated, beached, stranded. This could have profound repercussions.

CONSENSUS FLUTTERED back into British politics this July and went on show on the Jimmy Young television programme. In front of a sceptical audience, Labour's Denis Healey and the Tories' Lynda Chalker vied with each other to prove whose party had done most to bring down apartheid. There were no winners. In the view of several of the audience the moral simplicity of opposing apartheid was being perverted by party politics.

But from the wets in the Conservative party to the stern souls of the Labour Left there is certainly consensus. It says: apartheid is morally abhorrent and is anyway doomed to end. It should therefore be ended as quickly and painlessly as possible. For that purpose, economic sanctions should be imposed against South Africa. Church leaders, if not the Church Commissioners, agree. David Owen agrees. David Steel agrees. Even most Conservative voters agree. Mrs Thatcher stands alone, but only South Africa applauds her for that.

This consensus was arrived at somewhere between the middle of June and early July this year. It is the first of what are going to be many major repercussions throughout Britain and Western Europe of the epic struggle in South Africa. The political repercussions could include the first significant isolation of the Right since they began to champion the politics known as Thatcherism 10 years ago; a changed relationship between Western Europe and black Africa as a whole; a breakthrough in the ability of British popular opinion to come to terms with its imperial past; the growth in extent and ambition of black politics here, with consequent effects on 'moderate' British racism.

The political repercussions for Britain are likely to be far more important than the economic consequences which have been exaggerated both by the Right, in their opposition to sanctions, and the Left, in their stress on British responsibility for apartheid.

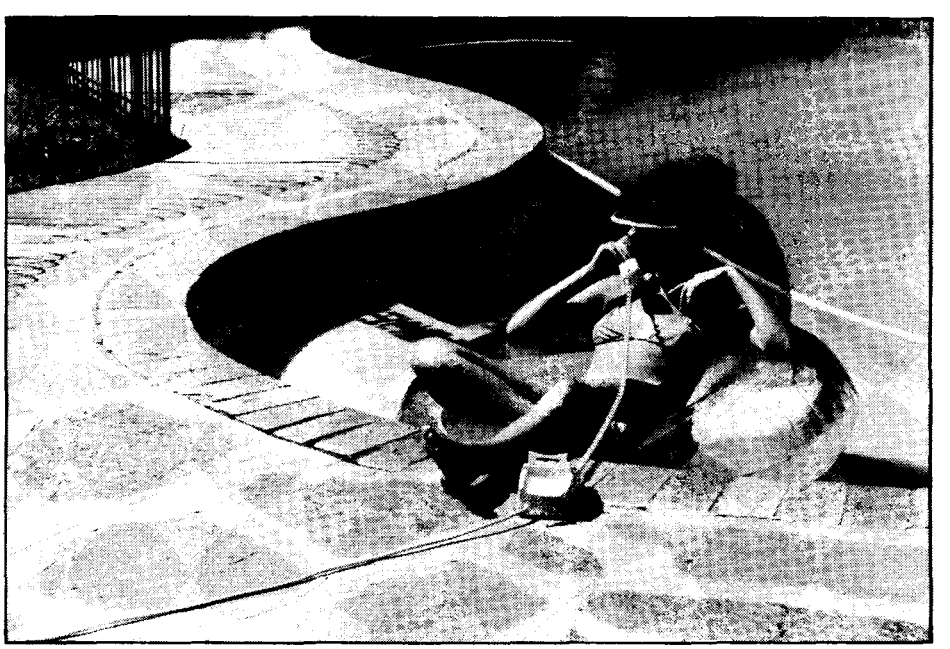
The new consensus has been the most noticeable of the political repercussions because party politicians are what the media notices, and because it has been absent so long. On June 18, 80 Tory MPs tabled an amendment opposing sanctions – Lynda Chalker was welcoming ANC President Oliver Tambo at the time – in the belief that they could still lead a groundswell of popular support for apartheid. They were seen as backwoodsmen. Since then, Mrs Thatcher has been forced to use the language of 'abhorrence with apartheid' in order to justify her abhorrence of sanctions. No-one believes her. A gallup poll revealed that 63% of British people think she favours apartheid. The same poll showed that even 54% of conservative voters sympathised with South Africa's black population, while only 11% thought she did. Her words no longer have that familiar ring of conviction as her supporters watch, with increasing embarrassment, her squirmings in the international limelight.

Of course it is not just her. Apartheid has always been the Right's weak point. You cannot bang on for years about freedom and democracy and then uphold a system where even to the most prejudiced eye neither exists.

Not that the far Right cared about such inconsistencies when apartheid seemed to offer a stable economic system and safe allies in a vulnerable part of the world. But they have been left with no ideological justification for their stance; and as they pioneered the politics of the last decade through ideology, they are now floundering.

Out of tune

At first both the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* wrongly thought this profound Conservative dilemma could be resolved by words. If they *said* they were against



Johannesburg 1985: Northern suburbs pool owner cooling off.

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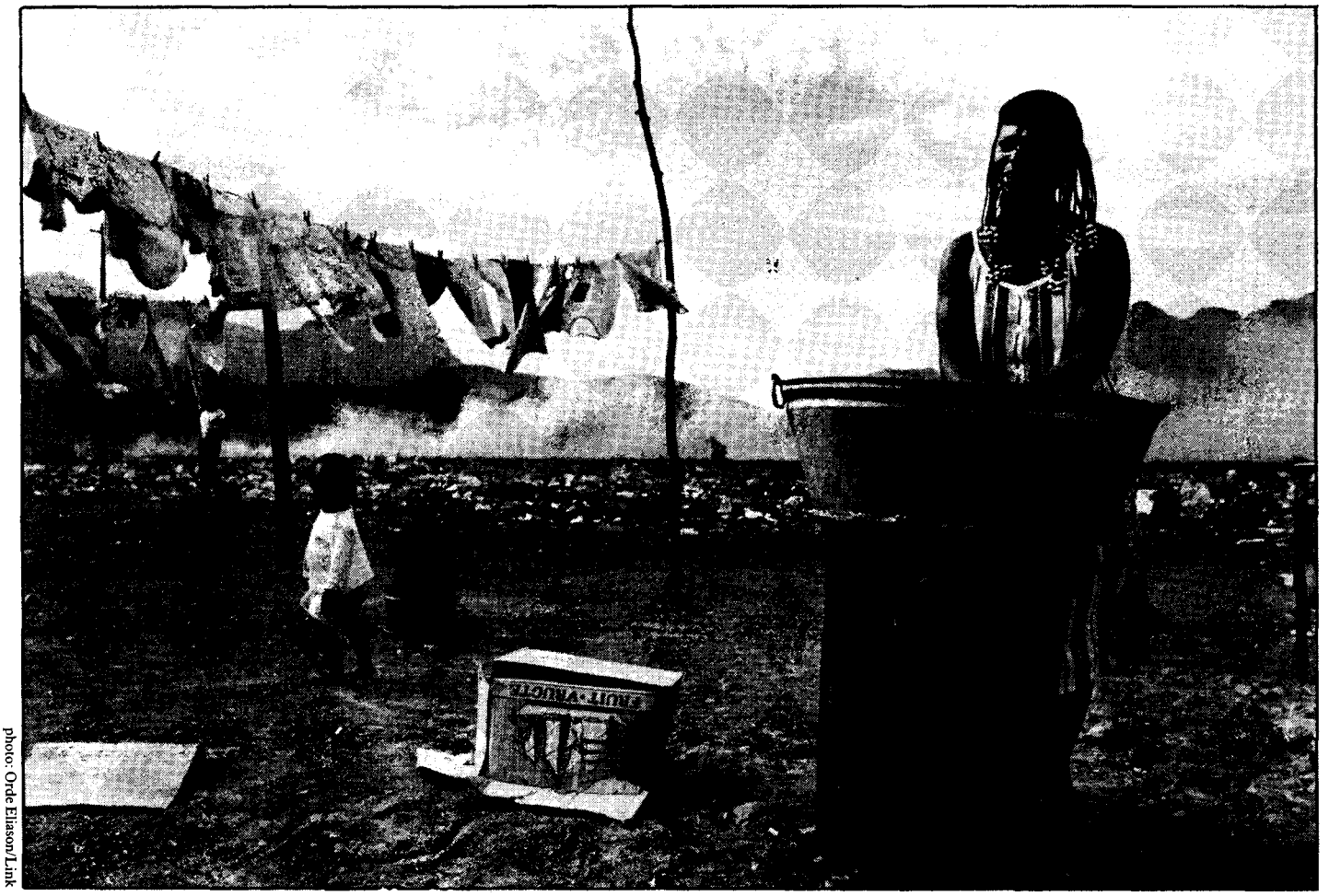

photo: Orde Eliason/Link

Worcester 1986: Washing clothes in the black township of Zwelitemba.

apartheid, black people here and white people in South Africa would believe them and revolution would be averted. 'Apartheid could be ended by discussion' said a fatuous *Times* headline on June 18. Sure. Geoffrey Howe will bore them all into submission.

Two days later the *Daily Telegraph* cried in alarm: 'The government has a responsibility which thus far it has failed to meet: it must demonstrate, incontrovertibly, its abhorrence of the South African government's refusal to concede the principle of political rights to its black majority.' Why the shift? 'If the Conservatives wish to win the next election (if morality doesn't touch Mrs T's heart, this point will) they must maintain the support of millions of people in the middle ground of politics who find apartheid deeply repugnant.'

The popular repugnance for apartheid came as a shock for the Right (and a more pleasant one for the Left). But that is just one, if the most serious, of a series of errors of judgment they have made in the last two years. From political ballots through the (averted) sale of British Leyland to the bombing of Libya, the Right has overestimated the quality of its popular support. Temporarily, the interests of a white business class, seeking an entrée back into politics in the 1970s, were similar to those of a lot of other people. All the troubles of society were identified as the products of state socialism and moral permissiveness. The 'ideological' Right identified the causes and thus produced the solution: 'rolling back the tide of socialism'.

It was not so much a revolution as a counter-revolution and their energy was always higher when scorning their enemies – Norman Tebbit's forte – than when pursuing a bright new world. They were slow to recognise that after they had vanquished their enemies and produced, not a bright new world but a poorer and uglier one, they could no longer carry the people with them.

They believed they could carry them on apartheid because they assumed that most white Britons would, like them, identify with white South Africans. They assumed that their business interests in South Africa would be shared and defended by the white working class here. They thought the popular support for Mrs Thatcher's evident racism would translate into a doughty defence of white supremacy in South Africa – or at least indifference to the black population.

Apartheid and the new Right

Their problem was that they could not think such thoughts out loud. Apartheid can only be publicly defended if you believe in white supremacy. There is nothing in the ideology of the new Right which allows them to say that white people are genetically superior to black and thus have a nature-given right to enjoy rights which they deny to black people. Instead, they have had to resort to arguments which often verge on the mystical and always on the mythological, about homogeneous racial, national cultures.

It may stretch the bounds of credibility and fly in the face of history when they assert that white Britons share a common cultural and ethnic heritage. But if Britain is for the ancient British, then Africa must be for the Africans. Not for Africans who, as the Boers insist, include white people who have made Africa their home. But the Africans who are there by reason of their

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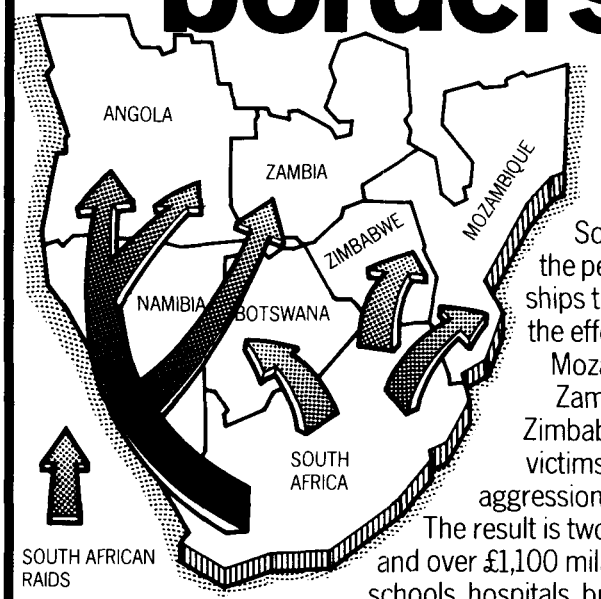

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THE SOUTH AFRICAN CRISIS

ethnic origin, their shared racial culture. For black Africans.

That's how the logic of the ideology goes. But it's not the logic of the new Right's project of counter-revolution, of beating back the menace of socialism. Then the argument does lead to a justification of white supremacy because all black people are potential and actual forces on the side of socialism or at least against international capitalism. All black people come out of a history of oppression so all black people carry the historic potential of overthrowing their oppressors. Apartheid kept them in check. Apartheid is still the only way of stopping revolution before it happens because a white right-wing party in Africa has none of the means available to a white right-wing party in the West of getting popular opinion on its side.

This tacit defence of apartheid stems from a position which is hostile to all traditions of socialism and radical mass action. It does not find a strong echo in the sort of popular racism prevalent today. Racism is not a simple ideology with a single cause and a single manifestation. There is, for instance, the paranoid racism which sees black people as 'other', as an incarnation of all that is most frightening and unknowable. German Nazis employed it when they were mobilising a lesser insanity: the 'common sense' working class racism which attributes conditions of poverty to competition from 'outsiders' for scarce jobs and housing. That in turn is not identical to the 'refined' racism of the professional middle class who see black people as an extreme version of the working class: that much more criminal, ungovernable, alien and incapable of managing their own lives.

Most of the time, different racisms merely reinforce each other and to the victims of racism such distinctions are irrelevant niceties. But they become significant when trying to understand why the far Right support apartheid but has found it hard to say so and why a large majority of the population that is, on the whole, hostile to black immigration, does not. Ironically, the very strength of the political ethic 'I'm not racist but...' increases the attraction of opposing apartheid. One can express moral abhorrence at racism while still supporting racist practices and beliefs at home.

If Mrs Thatcher, once so sure of touch, has lost her grip on popular feeling here, it is partly because of class. For it is not just that apartheid breaks the basic rules of fair play – one person, one vote. It is also that as an economic system apartheid flouts the values of ordinary white people. Twelve years ago my next door neighbour, a white single mother who worked hard for low wages to suport herself and her child remarried and went to live in South Africa. Her mother was troubled by her letters. The daughter didn't have to lift a finger; she even had a black woman wash her floors. It didn't seem right.

Mrs Thatcher has preached the ethic of hard work and self-sufficiency. Why should those here, who cannot afford servants, rise up to defend a system which provides them not as a reward for hard work, but merely because of the colour of their skins? If, as a symbol of white supremacy, apartheid has little to offer 'ordinary' racists here, it is equally hard to identify with it as a material way of life.

Defining a new relationship

But we seem to be seeing more than a refusal to rise to the defence of apartheid. In response to the clear-cut determination of black South Africa to achieve national liberation, another shift is taking place. It is to do with a sense of national identity, a vital element of popular political ideology which must have, at its heart, a sense of national history.

If British political culture has largely ignored Africa, as it tries to ignore Ireland, it is not because it does not know that many

the popular repugnance for apartheid came as a shock for the Right

of the causes of 'the troubles' lie in British history. It is because it does not see why it should accept responsibility for the sins of its ancestors. School children may not learn the history of imperialism. They do know there was something called the slave trade, conducted by British merchant interests, and that British interests once governed large chunks of Africa. If this *is* the history of Britain's relation with the rest of the world, it is not something to be proud of. And if it is not accepted as Britain's history, then Britain as a country in the world has no history.

There is undoubtedly a popular desire to have a surer sense of what it means to be British. The Falklands war was misleading. At the time, a Left struggling for survival at the lowest point in its modern history, assumed they saw in the Falklands a passionate recrudescence of nostalgia for empire and superpower status. It was a misinterpretation. However much nostalgia there is for the days of British colonial rule, nobody with their head screwed on the right way believes that Britain can or should resume that role.

In those countries where the effects of empire live on, disastrously, no history is forgotten. The reverse is true in Britain. For as long as the ill effects of empire live on, it cannot come to terms with its own past. A new generation of apologists for empire may be arising. But they have only felt the need to stir themselves, to say 'it wasn't *all* bad,' because the strong voices of the colonised have covered it in contempt.

Since 1983 we have seen the first faltering steps towards coming to terms with Britain's African history. There was an astonishing swell of popular feeling about famine in Ethiopia long before Band Aid and its offspring institutionalised a connection to African poverty as part of our political culture. That connection was made by a generation which never swelled in self-importance as it scanned the pink patches stretching right across the map of Africa; never knew the names Southern Rhodesia and British East Africa, Gold Coast and Nyasaland. Its images are not those of their parents, of the fearsome Mau Mau or the hauling down of the British flag. They are of a needless and outrageous starvation while unwanted food is stockpiled in Europe.

It was, as many have said, an ambivalent feeling. Who can be afraid of a starving African baby, or not be moved by the haggard dignity of its mother? Nonetheless, the desire to give, to do something, spoke of an acceptance of responsibility for a people who are infintely more remote than the whites of South Africa. The response asserted new geographic identities: of Britain as part of food mountain Europe, of ordinary British people asserting a connection to Africa which their elders, haunted by an angry and guilty history, could not make. It was an act of reparation not for the young, but by the young for their elders.

A powerful opposition

To support the liberation movement in black South Africa is the crucial next step in the process of reparation. It is more testing than acts of charity galvanised by a charismatic pop star. It demands that white people play a supporting role while black people make history.

Solidarity movements are usually con-

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THE SOUTH AFRICAN CRISIS

fined to the committed Left. But there are times when the solidarity movement goes wider and in so doing radicalises its supporters. Vietnam is the best example, Chile a less dramatic one. It's often a vicarious form of politics (which is not to underestimate it), bringing to British people the stark horrors and noble passions which they dream about but rarely experience. In a country which has long found its own politics tired, stale and lacking in any moral imperative, the momentous issues of freedom and repression being fought out in South Africa allow British people a faint involvement in grand political passion.

it demands that white people play a supporting role while black people make history

Such passion is not a primitive force which naturally atrophies in sophisticated democracies. It is as much part of being human as the 'legitimate' passions of sex and love and greed for money. But it is repressed and bowdlerised in societies where the ardour of the party politician for a cause can seem as weighty as the ecstasy of a tv actress for a washing-up liquid. Through South Africa, or Vietnam or Chile we, starved of political grandeur, can find expression for it.

So when's the revolution? Such potential for new politics is all very invigorating. But those lined up against the forces for liberation in South Africa and their suporters in the USA and Europe are not small fry. They are not going to lie down and be walked over when a sufficiently large and enthusiastic demonstration comes marching over the hill. The Vietnam and Chile solidarity campaigns made an effect, not least on their own supporters. But the US government did not get out of Vietnam until 1975. General Pinochet is still in power in Chile. If this solidarity movement is going to have effect it has to take into account both the strength of its opponents as well as the need to sustain and toughen up its own possible constituencies of support.

Its opponents are those whose economic interest in South Africa would be severely jeopardised by the end of apartheid and those, like Reagan and Thatcher, whose mission in life is to combat world 'communism'. There will undoubtedly be conspiracies to undermine the ANC and the domestic solidarity movements, to fund organisations within South Africa which will oppose the ANC or genuine national liberation movements. It will not be done in the name of supporting apartheid but of limiting financial chaos, defending hapless white citizens, safeguarding domestic jobs, keeping out the communist menace and so on.

Those arguments have not yet been effectively put to the broadly anti-apartheid electorate so that general support has not been tested. There has only been the argument against sanctions put by, for example, the 80 Tory MPs, many of whom have an interest in South Africa, *Times* journalist David Watt who is an adviser to Rio Tinto Zinc, and the discreetly formed committee of companies wishing to defend their stake in the apartheid economy.

But their ranks are not united. There are long-term strategies to consider and within the business and right-wing community there are certainly those who accept that apartheid is doomed, and prolonging its life only prolongs the deterioration of South Africa's economic yield. Their interest is in securing their trade links and investments by replacing apartheid with a modified form of European or American domination. They want apartheid to end in order to avert revolution, not to provoke it.

Black Africa

Such calculations always accompany any threatened national revolt. But there is a new factor in this burgeoning international crisis which no previous repressive regime has had to contend with. The new factor is the role of the neighbouring states – meaning not just the front-line states but the whole of black Africa – and the identification of substantial sections of the population in Western Europe and the USA with Africa.

At the time of writing, several African countries have pulled out of the Commonwealth Games over South Africa. President Kaunda of Zambia is pressing for concerted action by African states to achieve sanctions against apartheid. Western Europe cannot afford to sustain apartheid at the expense of its trade with the whole of Africa. Britain may be the third most important trading partner for South Africa. In the league of Britain's trading partners South Africa was only the 17th and until Nigeria's recent economic malaise, Nigeria was more important.

What we are seeing through the prism of South Africa is a significant reshaping of geographic communities. It has been going on for some time, most markedly with the post-war notion of the Arab world as a regional and ethnic entity. It has been happening in Europe; the EEC countries responding to both the bombing of Libya and the South African emergency as a political as well as economic bloc. It is happening to people who live in Europe; even the ultra-British commentators on the World Cup and Wimbledon described contestants in terms of the continent they came from fitting Britain firmly into the Euopean slot. And though the Commonwealth itself is shaped by the old divisions of empire, in practice it functions as a regional forum for pressing the claims of Third World regions, especially black Africa, on reluctant Western ears.

Yet again, in this process, Mrs Thatcher is on the verge of being isolated. For her, the key international formations are not of imperial history or even of modern West Europe; they are, despite the Falklands, of right-wing governments against communists, terrorists and other uppity no-gooders. She would prefer to stand side by side with Reagan against the ANC, scorning the moderate EEC, were it not for the other part of this new factor – the impact of South Africa on domestic black politics.

Black politics at home

Its impact on black American politics has already been considerable. Here there has been no nationwide black campaign, like Jesse Jackson's presidential bid, to take up anti-apartheid in its wake. Indeed, in Britain, black politics has consistently been pressed back into being parochial in its organistion and concerns. So much has black politics in Britain been confined to local activism that 'community' has become a euphemism for black.

white dominated organisations . . . on the Left will have to make space as black political leaders take the stage

That is changing. The focus of many black groups is already shifting away from 'community' policing, 'community' arts, 'community' relations. They are having to deal with the most momentous and demanding international issues. So in a way are white-dominated organisations, but the implications of the struggle against apartheid go deeper in black politics.

Thus, unlike previous solidarity move-

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Anti-Apartheid Declaration

The London Borough of Hackney declares its abhorrence of, and total opposition to, the racist regime of South Africa and its illegal occupation of Namibia and believes that the apartheid system is a suppression of human dignity, and a threat to world peace and racial justice.

The Council is fully committed to the cause of freedom, justice and equality in South Africa and supports those, who through struggles against apartheid, have become its victims in one form or another; and to saluting the struggles and sacrifices of the liberation movements, in particular the African National Congress (ANC) and the South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia, to liberate their peoples.

In accordance with these views, the Council will, within the limits of its legal powers, campaign to end all links between the Council and the apartheid regime of South Africa, utilising all social, political, economic, and legal measures that are at its disposal. In particular it will, having regard to the Council's legal powers and duties, and as long as the present regime in South Africa remains in power, pursue the following practices:

1 Cease the purchase of any goods originating from South Africa and Namibia;

2 Ensure that the Council is not officially represented at any function attended by representatives of the White South African Government, the South African Embassy, the Bantustans' or trade missions and refuse to meet or receive any official visitors from the white South African regimes in South Africa and/or Namibia;

3 Campaign against all official links between Britain and the minority regimes in South Africa and Namibia;

4 Withhold the use of leisure facilities from any sporting, cultural, or political event involving participants who are known to be supporters of the white South African regimes in South Africa and Namibia;

5 Promote public understanding and encourage the positive teaching of the situation in Southern Africa through highlighting the history, culture and struggle for self-determination of the Black South African and Namibian people, including the role of black women and black organised labour in this struggle;

6 Work towards the commitment to the naming of streets, buildings and other facilities in Hackney after prominent opponents of the white racist regimes in South Africa and Namibia;

7 Discourage the advertisement of apartheid South African products at public sites and facilities in Hackney;

8 Ensure that this policy is fully implemented throughout Hackney Council.

The Council hereby declares that Hackney, as part of its Anti-Racist commitment, is opposed to apartheid in all its forms, and undertakes in co-operation with those organisations and movements named and identified above to organise appropriate events to publicise and implement this declaration and encourage other organisations in Hackney to do likewise.

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ments, the assimilation of support work into domestic political issues will change the nature and import of that support work. Questions of national, ethnic and geographic identities are raised. Possible new alliances within the Left may emerge; for while most people support the ANC's leadership of the liberation struggle it has its critics on the hard Left for being too conservative and too close to the Communist party.

And precisely because these issues are so significant, white dominated organisations – and journalists – on the Left will have to make space as black political leaders and writers take the stage to define what the issues are, not just for black people.

These are some of the changes, most of them exciting, which South Africa can effect in Britain. It is an optimistic view. And even within that optimism, it does not count the cost in lives lost and damaged in South Africa.

There are much less optimistic possibilities. Black politics in Britain may remain too parochial to respond. White solidarity, when it gets over the drama of the last few weeks, may whittle back down to the dedicated few. Limited sanctions may be imposed; not enough to have any effect in South Africa but enough to close the gap between Thatcher and 'moderate' opinion, and enough to lose some people their jobs. Those who support apartheid will undoubtedly conspire – conspiracy theory has its moments – to defend their interests.

Images of bloodshed and chaos in South Africa, of blacks fighting blacks, of economic damage in Britain could produce a backlash. Instead of beginning the acceptance of end of empire it could provoke a sulky and racist insistence that only the

white South Africa could use the nuclear bomb

empire worked. Instead of the Left turning outwards again, it will turn its back on the insoluble problems of South Africa, as it has on Ireland and have sectarian fights over the right line in solidarity work. And white South Africa could use the nuclear bomb.

Whether the best or the worst happens is not within the control of the British Left nor, indeed, the Conservative government. What matters, here, is whether the Left can think widely enough about the implications of the history being made in South Africa to make history again in Britain. □

The neo-Nazi Afrikaner Weerbestandsbeweging (AWB) march through Pretoria (1985).

DIVISIONS IN THE LAAGER

The white regime has been placed under quite new pressures. The result is growing conflict within the white community. But the regime is still very much intact.

Roger Omond

NOT EVEN PW Botha's most ardent admirers would call him an intellectual. The man who left Stellenbosch University more than 50 years ago to become an organiser for the National party has, however, dozens of underemployed academics to provide him with justifications and devices to 'reform' apartheid while maintaining power. The days of crude *wit baasskap* (white domination) are over – in theory. One of the few growth industries in the sagging South African economy is in political science where fiddling with constitutions, re-drawing maps and rationalising racialism is much in vogue.

South Africa's latest state of emergency may be thought to be incompatible with the reforming image Mr Botha has been at pains to present to the world. In fact the two go hand in hand. The academics who advise Mr Botha have devised a neat pseudo-science to explain it all based on two adages. The first is de Tocqueville's, 'The most perilous moment for a bad government is when it seeks to mend its ways', and the second is one that has served white South Africa well for 300 years: 'Divide and rule.'

But it is not put so crudely. In May this year Mr Botha rewrote de Tocqueville: 'Whenever a country experiences a period of reform, there is bound to be uncertainty,' he told the president's council, one of the new institutions devised to put a gloss on apartheid. Divide and rule has been dressed up under a variety of names: separate development, parallel development, multinational development and now co-operative co-existence.

The reform policy has the intellectual blessing of a number of in-house academics in South Africa and also of a Harvard political scientist, Professor Sam Huntington, who is much in vogue.

Reform and repression

'It is not inconceivable,' he wrote a few years ago, 'that narrowing the scope of political participation may be indispensable to eventually broadening that participation.' He went on to say that 'the centralisation of power may also be necessary for the government to maintain the

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control over violence that is essential to carry through major reforms.' Further, the process of reform requires 'substantial elements of duplicity, deceit, faulty assumptions and purposeful blindness.'

Huntington's thesis has been characterised by the former leader of the Progressive Federal party, Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, as: 'Coercion and reform go hand in hand; a measure of instability is a symptom of successful reform . . .' Dr Slabbert, the most intellectual politician since Dr Verwoerd but with a rather more sane view of life, is unimpressed with the Huntington thesis: Machiavelli, he has observed, said it earlier and better in *The Prince*.

But Huntington is a rather more respectable name than Machiavelli for politicians and political scientists to quote in support of what could be called repressive reform. One key question, however, is whether the South African government is really intent on Huntington's 'major' reforms or whether it is merely modernising white domination. Following on from that, what further 'reforms' can be expected?

To date, the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts have been abolished, the pass laws scrapped, much 'petty' social apartheid buried. Promised for the future is a statutory council on which Africans will serve (although they will probably still be in a minority) that will join the existing tri-cameral parliament for whites, Coloureds and Indians.

There have been hints that the Group Areas Acts may be amended, relaxing the strict residential segregation that the government has spent so long in implementing. Under the guise of 'local democracy', decisions to allow 'grey' areas will not be made by central government but by municipal councils. This has a double purpose: it allows the government to escape right-wing flak by putting the onus on city councillors and it also challenges those liberal city authorities which have been pleading for apartheid to be relaxed to implement their principles at the risk of losing votes.

The limits of reform

But that may be as far down the reform path as Mr Botha cares to go. There is a limit: Gerrit Viljoen, a former head of the once-powerful Broederbond and one of the more *verlig* (enlightened) members of the cabinet has said that reforms will not affect

divide and rule has been dressed up under a variety of names

'own residential areas, own schools, own education departments, and own separate political representation'. Mr Botha himself is on record as saying that he does not favour 'endangering my own people's right to self-determination'. Shorn of the not very subtle code language, this means continued white – and particularly Afrikaner – control.

That control rests on a number of pillars, one of the most important being the Population Registration Act that classifies every South African into one race group or another. Without it, legislated apartheid is impossible – and there have been no significant indications that the government is prepared to go as far as scrapping the act.

Mounted parade at an Afrikaner Weerbestandsbeweging (AWB) cultural day.

P W Botha at a military parade in his honour.

Mr Botha knows the situation in which he has placed himself. The reforms he has introduced – and even the ones to come – are not enough. One *verligte* Afrikaner Nationalist, Harald Pakendorf, recently fired as editor of the *Vaderland* newspaper because he was too liberal, has recalled President Paul Kruger's words in a meeting with Lord Milner shortly before the Anglo-Boer War: 'It is not the vote you want for the *Uitlanders* (foreigners); it is my country you want.'

Mr Botha probably thinks the same way today. He set in motion the 'reform' process not because of a newly-discovered love of democracy but because it became clear that classical apartheid was too expensive – at all levels – to defend. 'We have outgrown the outdated concept of apartheid,' he said earlier this year.

The statement was greeted with cheers from the wish-fulfilling English-speaking establishment: it meant, they said, that Mr Botha had given the presidential seal of approval to the claim made some years ago by the *verlig* Dr Piet Koornhof, now chairman of the president's council, that 'apartheid is dead'.

It was left to Dr Slabbert to point out that Mr Botha's announcement was capable of another interpretation: that South Africa would still have apartheid and only outdated concepts would be scrapped. Hence the abolition of the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts, the pass laws and 'petty' social apartheid. The major structures of apartheid – the homelands, for example – still remain and will continue to do so. Divide and rule still applies.

Fissure amongst the whites

On the right-wing of Afrikanerdom there is no such thing as an outdated concept of apartheid. In those ranks, anything that

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changes the model of apartheid *circa* 1966 – the year that Dr Verwoerd was killed – is heresy.

But even those backwoodsmen are thinking. While Mr Botha's academic advisers draft and redraft constitutions, the far Right re-draw maps. What is of paramount importance to them is the survival of the Afrikaner *volk*. The best way to achieve that, some argue, is to revive the concept of the original *Boerestaat* – the Afrikaner homeland – and the rest of the country can take care of itself. Just where the borders are to be drawn is a matter of some dispute.

The simpler, back-to-the-land *volk* with a distrust for modern civilisation are apparently prepared to settle for a relatively small, undeveloped stretch of the Transvaal and Free State with access to the sea through Richards Bay in northern Natal.

Others, including the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Weerbestandsbeweging (AWB), want the three 19th century Boer republics – all the Transvaal, Free State and northern Natal – which just coincidentally contain most of the country's wealth. In this new *Boerestaat*, wherever the borders are drawn, would be revived the old constitutional concept of 'no equality in church or state' between black and white.

This, however, is the stuff of pipedreams, however attractive the theory may look to the beleagured right-wing Afrikaner. That Afrikaner is confused and angry: the enemy now is not only British imperialism, communism and the blacks but also the forces of *verligtheid* represented by Mr Botha. Having been fed a diet of undiluted racism since 1948, the Right is having to adjust to the 'reforming' government admit, as the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Chris Heunis, did recently that apartheid had led to 'lunacies'.

As a result the far Right, in the form of the Conservative party and even more fanatical Herstigte Nasionale party, has, for the first time since the original split in the National party in 1969, been making strong showings in rural constituencies of the Transvaal and Free State. One estimate is that the far Right could conceivably win up to 64 seats in the white parliament – still short of a majority of 84 but enough to result in a hung parliament.

It is to combat this perceived electoral threat and because he is a genuine Afrikaner nationalist that Mr Botha has reverted to his hard-man image – what the Afrikaners call *kragdadigheid* – and introduced states of emergency, unleashed the security forces on the townships, and revived B J Vorster's defiant dictum to the West during the 1977 general election: Do your damndest.

The altitude of business

The far Right pose another threat to 'reform'. They are securely entrenched in the bloated bureaucracy that has been necessary to adminster apartheid and which also provided secure and relatively well-paid employment to hundreds of thousands of Afrikaners. Piet Koornhof, now chairperson of the president's council, once called this bureaucracy a 'tortoise' and was said to have been kicked upstairs because he had failed to persuade the civil servants who actually deal with blacks of the need for reform.

The AWB leader Eugene Terre'Blanche.

More recently, a cabinet minister accused the police of failing to protect his colleague Pik Botha, the foreign minister, from the forces of the AWB at a political meeting in the Transvaal. Large elements of the security police still prefer to blame 'communist agitators' for township unrest and have persuaded at least the previous and present minister for law and order not to make concessions to the African National Congress or its internal allies. The military, once regarded as a bastion of *verligtheid*, has been willingly co-opted to suppress dissent inside the country while at the same time destabilising South Africa's neighbours.

there have been ominous warnings that the full might of the state has yet to be deployed

While looking over his right shoulder trying to minimise conservative electoral losses, Mr Botha – like his predecessors – has been trying to win English-speaking white support. The AWB plays an unwitting role: pictures of jackbooted AWB members guarding the chilling figure of their leader, Eugene Terre'Blanche, against a backdrop of a swastika-like emblem, send English-speaking voters flocking to Mr Botha's side.

But even before the strong emergence of the AWB, the English vote had become an important factor in Mr Botha's calculations. Big business, notably Gavin Relly, head of the giant Anglo American Corporation, supported the government in the 1983 referendum on the new constitution. Their desire to help Mr Botha was given impetus by his promise that the government would be less interventionalist in the economy.

Since then, however, the love affair has cooled. There is some despair at what is perceived as Mr Botha's lack of strong leadership. There are protests at the detention of trade unionists with whom business has to deal. There is much hand-wringing at the iniquities of apartheid. And there have even been talks with the banned African National Congress. But there has not been much concrete action, merely a succession of appeals to the government which have been ignored.

There is also now, after decades during which apartheid provided a plentiful supply of cheap (although often inefficient) labour, concern that Black South Africans equate oppression with capitalism. Self-interest and the prospect of continued profits demand faster changes than Mr Botha is prepared to deliver.

And the future?

What of the future? One of the few things that South Africans of all persuasions agree on is that the government is determined to keep control of whatever reform changes it introduces. That means, in the words of the University of Cape Town's Institute of Criminology, that 'highly repressive state measures, with detention as a central device, constitute part of the reform package' and are not 'a hangover from earlier authoritarian periods'.

Reform notwithstanding, Mr Botha and his academic advisers are united in their determination to maintain power for as long as possible. To that end, there have been ominous warnings that the full might of the state has yet to be deployed against the restive black population. Combined with Pretoria's signals that it is prepared to weather sanctions rather than be forced by external pressure into making more concessions, this seems to indicate that the laager, which proved so useful to the Voortrekkers 150 years ago, is not about to be abandoned. □

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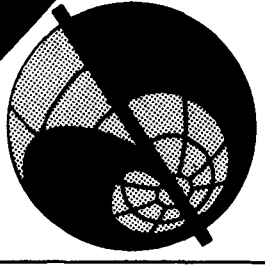

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LATIN AMERICA: Can't pay... Won't pay?

John Wells

Latin America is suffering an appalling economic catastrophe. No other region of the world is experiencing such a massive contraction in economic activity.

INTERNATIONAL BANKERS have recently been congratulating themselves on the way they've handled the debt crisis. However, whilst the bankers may be sleeping more soundly at night, their enhanced peace of mind has been purchased at the expense of a huge increase in suffering and misery in the Third World. The debt problem has at best been contained; it has been by no means resolved. In this article we describe the boom and bust in bank lending to Latin America and take a look at the way the money was used together with the severe adjustment problems created by the sudden drying-up of new bank loans in 1982. Finally, we examine a number of possible global solutions to the debt problem and the directions which the foreign and international economic policy of a post-Thatcher government ought to take.

The lending syndrome

The profile of the boom and bust in bank lending to less developed countries was as follows. Lending got underway in the early 1970s, as banks operating in the Eurocurrency markets (centred on London) found themselves short of high quality borrowers in the developed countries. As a result, they began lending to a select group of rapidly-growing, middle-income, developing countries (eg, Brazil, South Korea, Mexico), whose strong economic performance at that time was based on the extraordinarily rapid growth of international trade and buoyant commodity prices which marked the final stages of the post-war boom.

The reason these countries were willing to borrow was partly because interest rates (both nominal and real) were low during the 1970s and partly because private bank credits came without the strings which were attached to credits from official institutions, such as the IMF.

Following OPEC1 (the first oil price-rise), there was a quantum leap in private bank lending to developing countries. On the one hand, there was a rapid increase in bank deposits, as those OPEC producers (especially in the Gulf), who were unable to spend all of their increased oil revenues, sought a safe haven for their surpluses; on the other hand, there was an enormous increase in loan demand from oil-importing developing countries, attempting to finance increased oil deficits. Thus, the Eurocurrency banks came to play a central role in the so-called recycling of petrodollars from surplus to deficit countries.

In retrospect it seems extraordinary that this task of petrodollar recycling – which was so crucial to the maintenance of international economic stability – should have been assigned, almost in its entirety, to the international private banks. However, the banks were eager to earn the profits which went with this new kind of lending, and the Gulf states were willing to deposit their surpluses with the banks.

Meanwhile, Washington was too preoccupied with other pressing matters, notably Watergate, to be able to devote much attention to devising an alternative mechanism in which official, international institutions (either new or existing ones) could have been assigned a larger role in the recycling process.

Be that as it may, there was certainly no shortage of private bank finance available for middle-income developing countries in the mid to late 1970s. Bankers were quite literally falling over one another in their attempts to press new loans on developing countries. With bankers' risk being reduced by the introduction of variable interest rates on loans (which ensured that borrowers paid whatever it cost the banks to acquire new deposits), as well as by the growth of syndicated loans (with hundreds of banks sharing the risk of a single loan), competition between banks to lend to developing countries became really quite intense. There was a gradual lengthening (from five to 15 years) in the term of loans, whilst spreads (ie, charges over and above the market rate of interest) were pared down.

Private bank credits came without strings which were attached to credits from official institutions, such as the IMF

Banks paid little attention to what countries did with the funds – indeed, most of the loans were not linked to specific projects, but took the form of general balance of payments support; however, looking at the macro-economic policies being pursued by some of the principal borrowers at the time, it is clear that sound banking principles could not possibly have been followed.

Meanwhile, a number of oil-exporting countries also borrowed funds. Countries like Mexico, Nigeria and Indonesia were keen to expand their economies as fast as higher oil prices and the availability of loans would permit, and their ability to borrow was enormously enhanced by both OPEC1 and OPEC2.

The big squeeze

However, in 1980-81, as the tight monetary policies of the first Reagan and Thatcher administrations began to take their toll of the world economy, loan conditions in international credit markets began to deteriorate: interest rates increased, and there was a sudden fall in the number of medium and long-term loans available to developing countries.

Then, in mid-1982, a wave of panic swept through the international private banking community regarding Latin America's ability to maintain satisfactory debt-service, and the lending bubble suddenly burst. Though partly psychological in character, this bankers' panic undoubtedly had an objective basis to it – namely, the sharply deteriorating international environment in which the borrowing countries were operating, with higher rates of interest, plunging commodity prices and a contraction in the volume of world trade.

Since that time, there has been virtually no new private bank lending (or 'fresh capital') to Latin America. What has happened is that the IMF has been acting as a sort of international debt collecting agency for the private banks, trying to ensure that debt-interest is paid on time and injecting (along with other official institutions)

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Table 1 Latin America's Balance of Payments (US$b)

	(1) Debt-interest and Profit Remittances	(2) Bank Loans plus other investments	(3) Trade Balance in goods and services*	(4) (3) as a % of Latin America's collective GDP
1980	–17.9	+29.5	–9.6	–1.1
1981	–29.1	+38.5	–12.3	–1.3
1982	–37.6	+19.2	–3.1	–0.3
1983	–34.2	+3.0	+26.2	+2.7
1984	–36.1	+10.3	+34.3	+3.3
1985	–35.1	+4.7	+29.9	+2.8

*Note: The figures across the rows do not necessarily add up because of the omission of changes in international reserves. *i.e. freight, insurance, tourism, etc.*
Source: UN Economic Commission for Latin America.

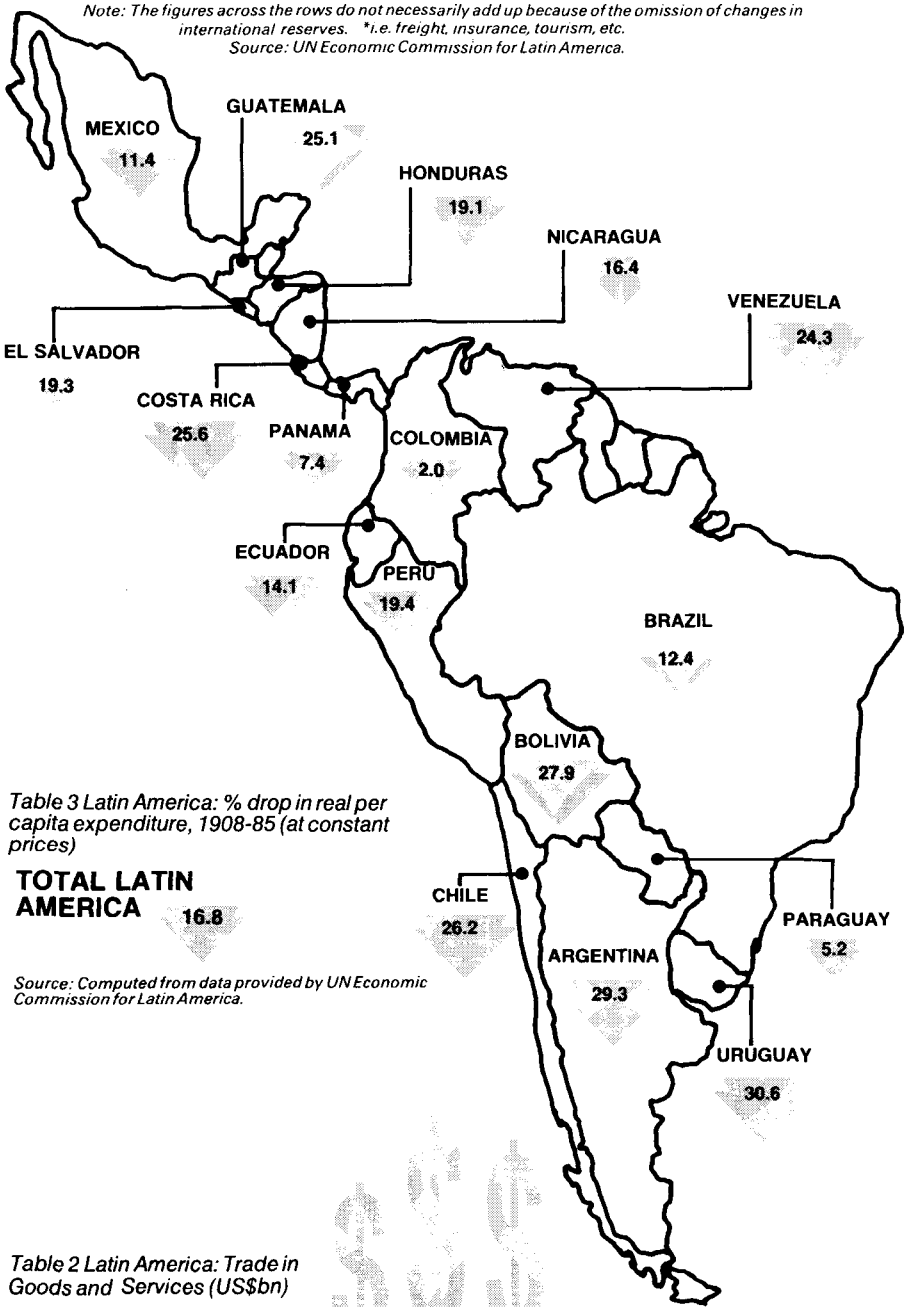

Table 3 Latin America: % drop in real per capita expenditure, 1908-85 (at constant prices)

TOTAL LATIN AMERICA 16.8

Source: Computed from data provided by UN Economic Commission for Latin America.

Table 2 Latin America: Trade in Goods and Services (US$bn)

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
EXPORTS	107.6	116.1	103.2	102.4	113.9	108.0
IMPORTS	117.1	128.4	106.2	76.2	79.7	78.1

Source: UN Economic Commission for Latin America.

small amounts of fresh capital. The banks, for their part, have had little choice but to roll-over capital repayments for future years; however, since they have been making virtually no new loans, they have been able to use their profits to bolster their reserves and increase their provisions for bad debts. As a result, there has been a steady improvement in bank balance sheets.

Meanwhile, with virtually no new loans forthcoming, the only way countries in Latin America could find the means to pay the interest on their outstanding debts was by generating huge export surpluses in trade in goods and services – and this meant imposing massive doses of austerity on their populations.

Thus, the threat to the stability of the international private banking system posed by Third World debt has hitherto been successfully contained, albeit via a set of temporary, *ad hoc* arrangements.

How were the loans used?

So how were the loans used? Basically, capital borrowing enabled countries in the region to finance import deficits in trade in goods and services and, thereby absorb resources from the rest of the world. Since in most poor countries, foreign exchange is a critical constraint on the development process, this infusion of foreign capital allowed Latin America to grow faster – at least for a few years – than it would otherwise have done. These transfers from the rest of the world amounted to between 1% and 3% of Latin America's GDP in the period 1970-81.

Ideally, the best way of using these resources would have been to devote them to relatively quick-yielding projects, which either earned and/or saved foreign exchange. This would have given countries at least some chance of being able to service their debts in the future – without having to take deflationary action to do so. Moreover, even if foreign loans were not used directly to fund projects of this sort, the general thrust of macro-economic policy in the borrowing countries should have been such as to encourage the generation and/or saving of foreign exchange in the economy as a whole.

In practice, countries used these foreign resources in a variety of different ways – and generalisations are difficult. There was, without doubt, a great deal of waste and corruption – particularly in Mexico, but also under the military dictatorships in the Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay). Furthermore, a large proportion of the funds were spent on arms

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THE TRUTH BEHIND THE BARBED WIRE

Murdoch's Millions

Rupert Murdoch made £47 million profit last year from his British papers. That's £900,000 a week.

But he wants even more to spend on his TV stations in the USA.

While the unions were still talking to him Murdoch was planning to move to Wapping without his employees. So he engineered a strike six months in advance. In a letter dated December 20th 1985 his solicitors advised him that *"the cheapest way of dispensing with his current workforce would be to dismiss them while participating in a strike or other industrial action".*

5,500 Sacked without compensation

Despite the unions following the law to the letter by holding a secret ballot, Murdoch callously took his solicitors' advice. **He sacked his 5,500 employees and didn't pay a penny of redundancy money.**

Journalist **Eric Butler** worked for the SUN for more than 16 years. All he got from Murdoch was a letter beginning *"Dear Sir or Madam"* telling him he was sacked.

Eileen Lindsay, a punch card operator at the Sunday Times for 8 years, says *"Life has certainly been tough since Murdoch sacked us. I have two young children to keep, and I just about managed when I was working."*

Martin Green, a printing press engineer says *"We had already agreed to move to Wapping but Murdoch forced us into striking so he could sack us. I've never been on strike before in my life. I worked for Murdoch for 16 years."*

Murdoch is avoiding his responsibilities to 5,500 people like Eric, Eileen and Martin. That is the main issue. The question of what to do with his unwanted print works is a secondary issue. We don't believe in trading property for people.

Rupert Murdoch's sacked employees want to work at Wapping and they want the right to a trade union to represent them.

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purchases (once again, especially in the Southern Cone).

In addition, rather than the type of project mentioned above – quick-yielding investments in sectors earning and/or saving foreign exchange – there were numerous examples of projects with long gestation periods in sectors of activity which neither earn nor save foreign exchange and which were socially unproductive into the bargain: projects such as luxury apartment buildings and shopping-centres. Moreover, the Argentine bourgeoisie, in particular, appears to have used the opportunity presented by the sudden influx of dollars to acquire an international portfolio of assets (businesses, property and financial assets abroad) – leaving the Argentine state with the job of servicing the resultant debts.

However, there are also many examples of foreign loans being put to good use. Brazil, in particular, generally used its foreign resources wisely, to strengthen the economy and consolidate the industrialisation process, with the country undertaking enormously successful programmes of export-expansion and import-substitution (especially in energy). Furthermore, in the oil-exporting countries of the region (Mexico, Venezuela and Ecuador), foreign resources were used largely to foster industrialisation and build up the economic infrastructure – in marked contrast to the 'deindustrialisation' which Thatcherite policies visited upon Britain in the wake of the successful development of North Sea fuel resources.

Worst-case Chile

The worst example of squandered resources was, undoubtedly, Pinochet's Chile, where loans were used in much the same way as North Sea oil revenue in Britain – to support an overvalued exchange rate and a rapid increase in imported manufactures. This led to the destruction of a large chunk of Chile's manufacturing capacity, whilst what economic expansion there was took place in sectors of the economy which were 'sheltered' from international trade, such as shopping-centres and luxury housing.

Thus, the record of how the Latin American countries used their resources is a very mixed one. However, it would be wrong to regard it as uniformly disastrous and to accept the view of many in international banking circles that Latin America only has itself to blame for the economic catastrophe in which it currently finds itself. Moreover, we should never forget that the bankers were jointly responsible for the lending-spree to South America.

Furthermore, whatever use was made of these resources, the fact that Latin America was willing to incur debts – and international private banks willing to lend to the region – in order to keep growth going and finance import deficits with the rest of the world contributed to maintaining international economic activity at a higher level than would otherwise have been the case in the 1970s.

The fact is some group of countries in the world economy had to be prepared to run the trade deficits corresponding to the surpluses being generated by OPEC. The developed countries had been quite unwilling to assume this responsibility and had managed to shuffle it off onto the non-OPEC developing countries (by means of inflation, recession and increased exports to OPEC). Unless Latin America had been willing to get into debt, then the level of economic activity and imports in Latin America would have been lower, and this would have had an adverse effect on output and employment in the rest of the world.

countries like Mexico, Nigeria and Indonesia were keen to expand their economies as fast as higher oil prices and the availability of loans would permit

Thus, the fact that the non-OPEC developing countries, which were, after all, the weakest link in the international financial system, were prepared to join hands with the international private banking community to finance the global trade deficit corresponding to OPEC's surplus shielded the world from an even more savage recession in the 1970s. It is in this sense that the Third World debt crisis must be looked upon as a global problem – and not the responsibility of the developing countries alone.

Economic adjustment and crisis in the region

When the flow of new bank loans dried up in 1982, the adjustment process forced upon the region was truly dramatic. In 1981, Latin America had been able to attract enough new capital to make interest payments on its outstanding debts, as well as to finance a deficit in trade in goods and services (amounting to US$12.3 billion) (see Table 1). However, by 1983, the region had access to a mere US$3 billion of new capital inflow and, therefore, had to finance most of its debt-interest payments by generating a surplus in trade in goods and services (see Table 1). This surplus amounted to US$26.2 billion in 1983, and additional surpluses of US$34.3 billion in 1984 and US$29.9 billion had to be generated in 1984 and 1985 respectively.

The only way of bringing about such a huge turnaround in the region's balance of trade, given the limited scope, in the short run, for rapid increases in export earnings was via a substantial contraction in imports. And, although all countries reinforced their already very considerable import control measures and engineered sharp devaluations of their exchange rates, the only way of reducing imports rapidly and on the required scale was via drastic cuts in the level of economic activity.

And the reductions in economic activity which did occur were truly dramatic. In some countries, the shock came in 1982: in that year per capita GDP fell by −14.4% in Chile, by −7.8% in Argentina and by −11.3% in Uruguay. In the subsequent year, 1983, per capita GDP fell by −14.3% in Peru, −11% in Bolivia, −7.6% in Mexico and −4.9% in Brazil. And, along with this decline in activity, there went savage increases in open and disguised unemployment, as well as real wage cuts for those still in work. Indeed, the ferocity of this economic tidal wave was such that it contributed to the downfall of several of the region's military dictatorships (eg, in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay).

Whilst consumption spending (both state and private) was undoubtedly squeezed during this process of adjustment, the brunt of the decline in real expenditure was borne by investment – as a result of cuts in government spending, turmoil in the region's financial sector and mounting bankruptcies and declining profitability in the productive sectors of the economy. Thus, as a share of GDP, investment is at an all-time low in the region, and the counterpart to this drastic decline in investment has been a huge fall in manufactured imports (especially capital goods). In fact, total imports fell by US$52.2 billion (or 40%) between 1981 and 1983 (see Table 2).

Thus, Latin America now finds itself in a true debt trap situation: its debts continue to increase, albeit slowly, as a result of the trickle of new finance coming from official international institutions (such as the World Bank); and yet the region is actually making massive transfers of goods and services to the rest of the world.

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Meanwhile, investment is exceptionally depressed, thereby inhibiting the region's capacity to achieve both growth and satisfactory debt-service in the future.

An economic catastrophe

The check to the region's economic development posed by events since 1980 has been truly extraordinary. Real per capita expenditure has been adversely affected by four factors: (1) the sharp decline in economic activity, in the period 1982/83, described above; (2) continuing increases in the region's population; (3) falling prices for the region's principal commodity exports and (4) the shift in trade flows, described above, as a result of which the region ceased to run an import deficit in trade in goods and services and now generates a huge export surplus.

The effect of each of these four factors in depressing real per capita expenditure in the period 1980 to 1985 is described on the accompanying map. Taking Latin America as a whole, real per capita expenditure declined by −16.8%! However, in the worst affected part of the region, namely the Southern Cone, the decline was even more dramatic: −29.3% in Argentina, −30.6% in Uruguay and −26.2% in Chile. Reductions in economic and social welfare of this size have probably rarely if ever been equalled – even in the depths of the 1930s depression. The catastrophic experience of the Southern Cone countries was also shared by the chronically poor Andean countries (Bolivia: −27.9% and Peru: −19.4%), as well as by a number of countries in Central America (Costa Rica: −25.6%; Guatemala: −25.1% and El Salvador: −19.3%). In fact, the reduction in economic welfare in the region as a whole would have been even greater, were it not for the much more moderate declines recorded by the two largest countries (Brazil: −12.4% and Mexico: −11.4%), both of whom, as argued above, made relatively good use of their foreign loans and where economic adjustment has, as a result, been comparatively mild.

Impact

The fact that Latin America is generating such huge surpluses in trade in goods and services is not only having a catastrophic effect on economic development and social welfare in the region itself, it is also having a negative effect on economic activity in the rest of the world. As Latin America desperately seeks to curtail its imports and does all it can to promote its exports, there is a corresponding increase in the pressures on output and employment in the developed countries – especially in internationally-exposed sectors, like manufacturing.

Thus, just as Latin America's willingness to get into debt in the 1970s helped to stabilise the level of economic activity in the rest of the world, so the fact that the region is now generating surpluses is imparting a significant deflationary twist to world economic activity.

Of course, the tribute now being extracted from Latin America (in the form of its US$30 billion export surplus) simply represents the region's contribution to meeting the cost of Star Wars, as well as the US consumer boom currently under way. With the US economy operating at a very high level of activity and US domestic savings depressed, the excess claim on US resources represented by the country's huge Federal Budget deficit can only be accommodated if the US sucks in resources from the rest of the world.

the worst example of squandered resources was, undoubtedly, Pinochet's Chile

Thus, the trade surpluses which Latin America is currently generating are helping to sustain the huge trade deficits (currently of the order of US$150 billion) being run by the US. Latin America is being bled dry in order to pay for Star Wars and for further wholly unnecessary increases in US consumer spending.

Why have there been no defaults?

One obvious question which arises is: why have the recently-elected democratic governments of Latin America been willing to heap so much misery and suffering on their populations for the sake of servicing debts which, for the most part, were contracted by previous authoritarian military regimes? Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and, earlier, Peru have all undergone successful transitions to democratic, civilian government, and the only authoritarian military regimes remaining in the region are those of Chile and Paraguay.

The advantages of default are obvious enough. As we have already argued, many countries in the region are running export surpluses and are not receiving – nor are likely to in the near future – any new capital inflow. In this situation, the immediate effect of default would undoubtedly be positive, since it would free foreign exchange, currently being devoted to debt-service, for the purposes of economic expansion – whilst there would be nothing to lose in terms of a cessation of new bank loans.

However, the adverse effects of default, which would come later, might be very large indeed, and it is these, and their largely unpredictable character, which are the main factor holding countries back from default. Moreover, for one country going it alone, there is the risk (some might say near certainty) of an all-out economic blockade by the developed countries. Although the countries in the region undoubtedly possess some degree of bargaining-power, default, at the very least, is bound to give rise to a period of prolonged economic and political instability – and this applies whether we are talking about a country going it alone or a collective default undertaken by some kind of Latin American debtors' club.

It is precisely this kind of instability which the newly-elected civilian governments of Latin America have, hitherto, sought to avoid – at almost any cost. Their overriding objectives have been the consolidation of their fledgling democracies and the end to recurrent military interventions in their national political life.

Since default is likely to trigger precisely the sort of economic and political instability (foreign exchange shortages and import rationing, inflation and a rising tide of nationalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric), which on previous occasions has provided such a fertile ground for military intervention, the maintenance of stability has been of absolutely central importance. This then is the main reason why the governments of these new democracies have so far preferred the option of massive and prolonged austerity to that of default.

Defaults still possible

The other point worth bearing in mind is that the leaders of most of the newly-democratic governments of Latin America are by no means extremists. Argentina's Alfonsin, for example, though certainly not on the Right, is probably exactly at the centre of the political spectrum, so far as economic matters are concerned, whilst it is as well to remember that President Sarney of Brazil was closely associated with the military throughout their 20 year period of rule. These politicians are still looking to the leaders of the developed countries to work out a solution to their problems.

Finally, neither Alfonsin nor Sarney appears to have been damaged politically by painful and prolonged austerity. On the contrary, they are both extremely popular

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– given the circumstances – mainly on account of their success in getting inflation down from hyper-inflationary levels by means of somewhat unorthodox prices and wages policies.

A final factor working against the development of a greater degree of solidarity amongst debtor nations has been the 'divide and rule' policy actively pursued by the banks and the US administration.

why have the recently elected democratic governments . . . been willing to heap so much misery and suffering on their populations for the sake of servicing debts

Whenever there is the slightest hint that a debtors' cartel may begin to materialise, bankers and US officials engage in a busy shuttle between the various Latin American capitals, playing each government off against the others, with promises of slightly better debt renegotiation terms.

However, despite their relatively compliant attitude hitherto, nobody should ignore the possibility of quite radical action from Latin America's civilian governments as popular resistance to the brutal and insensitive demands of the bankers begins to grow. The fact is Latin American governments have hardly even begun to exert the leverage available to them, if only they were to act collectively, in order to improve the terms they are getting from the banks. Moreover, the possibility of a really damaging default, with quite unpredictable consequences for the international financial system – Mexico is the most obvious candidate at the moment – cannot be entirely ruled out.

Recent international developments

The dramatic developments taking place in the world economy during the last few months – falling oil prices, falling interest rates and the realignment of the world's major currencies – may, in time, be seen to mark an important turning point in the development of the world economy. These events are certainly likely to have a beneficial impact on Latin America, taken as a whole, although the region's oil-exporting countries (Mexico, Venezuela and Ecuador) are unambiguous net losers.

The fall in interest rates and depreciation of the US dollar are directly beneficial to all debtor countries. Meanwhile, the region's net oil-importing countries (particularly Brazil, but also Chile and nearly all the Central American and Caribbean countries) have also benefitted directly from the collapse in oil prices. Furthermore, all countries in the region clearly stand to benefit *indirectly* – via trickle-down growth – from the stimulus which recent developments have given to economic activity in the developed countries. However, so far as the region's oil-exporting countries are concerned, this stimulus cannot possibly compensate for the adverse effect of lower oil prices.

Of all the countries in the region, Brazil clearly has the most to gain from recent developments in the world economy: it now faces the prospect of several years of sustained expansion; the country's new centre-left government now has no excuse – at least on the external front – for failing to do something to alleviate poverty and social and economic injustice. However, so far as the rest of the region is concerned, growth prospects remain quite dismal despite the recent turn of events. In fact, unless there is a major international initiative to eliminate the pressure on countries to generate huge trade surpluses, recovery is bound to be slow and halting – whilst the oil-exporting countries in the region seem set for further rounds of austerity.

Thus, in the absence of a major initiative from the developed countries, recent developments in the world economy cannot possibly put Latin America back on the road to prosperity. Moreover, it would be wrong, in any case, for the resumption of growth in Latin America to have to depend on 'trickle-down' from recovery in the advanced countries, since this is a mechanism which only serves to accentuate the already extreme degree of international income inequality. What is needed is some means of stimulating economic recovery directly in the Third World.

The way ahead

The obstacles to promoting economic recovery in the Third World are political, not technical – although in formulating technical solutions, a considerable degree of ingenuity and imagination will undoubtedly be required.

The main objective of such schemes must be to bring about a situation in which debtor nations are no longer forced to generate such huge trade surpluses. One simple solution would be for the IMF to create enough of its own international paper money (the SDR or Special Drawing Right) to cover the total of interest due every year on Third World debt. Each debtor country would then receive a quota of SDRs equivalent to the interest it was paying, with the SDR's being available to finance economic expansion.

In addition, the IMF could use its resources to pay off a proportion of the debts, as they became due for repayment each year – albeit at a discount, so as to ensure that the banks would bear at least some of the costs of their lending-spree. An alternative solution would be for the central banks of the currencies in which the debts are denominated simply to pay the interest directly to the banks, thereby leaving the debtor countries with additional foreign exchange to finance economic expansion.

Both these plans would undoubtedly be criticised as inflationary, since they would result in a considerable increase in the spending-power of the debtor nations. However, this is a risk which is well worth running – given that most commodity prices (oil and non-oil alike) are now exceptionally depressed, whilst the price level is now actually falling in Germany and Japan.

Whilst the proposals sketched out above might seem a bit far-fetched, some kind of really dramatic initiative is required if the debt problem is not to continue fouling up the system of international trade and finance, as well as blocking all prospects of a resumption of economic growth in the Third World.

Thus, it is absolutely essential for a post-Thatcher government in Britain, when and if it is elected, to begin pressing

Latin America now finds itself in a true debt trap situation

vigorously, in all possible forums, for an international solution to the Third World debt problem. For once, Britain could put its membership of various rich men's clubs to some use – acting as a spokesperson (with one foot in the Commonwealth) for the demands of the Third World countries. This is one of the directions which a post-Thatcher government's search for an independent, internationalist foreign policy surely has to take.

Furthermore, if we can create the political atmosphere conducive to taking international action to solve the debt problem, this would not only have a beneficial effect on the level of employment in Britain, but could be vital to securing international acceptance for the sorts of policies necessary to rebuild and reconstruct our own devastated economy. □

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GUILTY SECRETS

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Susie Orbach

The Role of Women's Therapy

Feminist therapy sprang out of the women's liberation movement. But the decline of the latter has changed the context of that therapy.

TEN YEARS AGO it was possible to start The Women's Therapy Centre in London because a vibrant movement brought social understandings and sought social solutions to the issues of women's individually experienced psychic distress. Feminist therapy grew *out* of the women's liberation movement and saw itself as *a part of* the movement. It wasn't a political activity *per se*, but neither was it something apart from the movement. It was akin to feminist theatre groups and other cultural activities.

Feminist therapy gathered its strength, its impetus, its *raison d'être* from three distinct trajectories.

One trajectory was the extension of the consciousness-raising process. In that process women explored how the social world shaped our individual private lives, our intimate relationships, our feelings about ourselves, our expectations about who we could be in the world, our notions about entitlement and so on. Although feminist theory said that you couldn't have feminism in one mind and body any more than you could have socialism in one country, we struggled to prefigure post-feminist relationships, between women and women and women and men, between adults and children, between teachers and taught, and so on.

And in the course of this ambitious task we recognised how deeply shaped we were by the institutions we had grown up in, how intricately structured the psyche is by the nexus of social relationships in which it was formed and developed. As we were rapidly discovering, personal change was not simply a question of will and intent. There were internal barriers to change that we needed to understand, to take on board and examine. We needed and felt compelled to confront the ways in which we continued as women to be complicit in our own oppression, to lie about orgasms, to feel insecure, to be preoccupied by our bodies, to put up with violence in our marriages.

A desire to confront such things led somewhat hesitatingly for some, more enthusiastically for others, to the work of Freud and his discovery of the unconscious and his contribution to hermeneutics.

The second route to the development of a specifically women's centred therapy, was the manifest hurt that socialisation to women's role had created. One in six women is hospitalised for mental distress during the course of her life; thousands and thousands of women are caught in the grip of debilitating and restricting phobias; women were and are the predominant users of tranquillisers and sleeping pills; thousands and thousands of women experience their relationship to their food as chaotic and distressing, and so on.

The women's liberation movement made it possible to see the evidence, the social and personal cost that patriarchy wrought on the lives of individual women. It suggested that a social understanding of such manifestations of women's distress could provide different treatment models.

The third trajectory originated from those feminists who were working within psychology and within social work, who could see clearly how a patriarchal world view had informed the theories and practices of these disciplines to the detriment of women clients.

These three trajectories then lead to a rethinking of the category of gender, of the principles of psychological development, of the therapeutic practices that might be useful and so on. But all such intellectual pursuits were taken up in the spirit of pragmatism, by which I mean a conception that as far as psychotherapy was concerned we wished to change what was in the present. We wished to help ourselves and other women deal with the ways in which patriarchy had hurt and disabled us. We were applying 'treatment' after the fact, if you like. But with an awareness that effective preventative treatment so that the next generation of girls and women would not suffer similarly would lie in the wider political sphere. Feminist therapy could only help heal present wounds. It was *not* conceived of as a therapeutic practice to be developed as a substitute for political change.

Absence of a movement

Today a whole generation of women are growing up in a quite different atmosphere. Consciousness-raising exists less and less as a political practice. And yet women today are facing a world with the same kinds of conflicts that made the women's liberation movement imperative for us. The world has not changed all that much. Yes, certainly equality is on the agenda, yes, women now feel more socially entitled to participate in the public life of the culture, to seek self-definition through work outside the home as well as through conventional channels of feminine self-expression. But these changes which the movement fought for are but openings.

The world that girls enter today is not one that values feminine culture. It is a world in which women who enter tradi-

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tional male preserves do so as unsure individuals without the benefit of the women's liberation movement behind them. The conflicts women feel in taking up education, in not having children, in having children, in fighting for better jobs, in being more vocal in the union, in refusing to service male bosses etc, are conflicts they must face as isolated women not as women with the movement behind them.

Today the woman who is frustrated or angry is unlikely to have a women's group to discuss this with. The personal difficulties rarely get framed within the political. Indeed the political has all too often disappeared from our understanding of personal relationships. Instead women are increasingly thinking that such problems are simply individual problems which require individual solutions. It is her fault if something is amiss. Therapy in this context then becomes a vehicle for the private management of despair. The solution to individually experienced problems without the recognition that such problems have social roots.

Therapy and the Right

In this context, there is the much wider acceptance that we have seen of therapy in the culture at large over the last decade. Therapy throws up many dilemmas. Of particular concern is the link between the therapeutic notion of personal responsibility and the prevailing right-wing ideological stance of personal responsibility.

In psychotherapy the idea of personal responsibility can be liberatory. It devictimises the individual, gives her access into understanding the emotional forces that motivate many of her actions, it provides clues to the complicity of the individual in unhelpful and hurtful practices and so on. It is a method for taking personal psychological power.

These quite laudatory practices from my point of view can sound similar at a superficial level with the ideological messages of the Right in which we learn it is our fault if we can't get a job, keep our family together, find decent housing, feel complicated about our sexuality, or can't cope with the racism or class prejudice that comes our way.

A frequent criticism of therapy is made on just these grounds, that it is a repudiation of public responsibility, a self-indulgence of the privileged, an individual response to public ills: social control elegantly reworked through the myth of the unconscious. I don't accept this argument because ultimately I don't believe that what therapy delivers is contentment *per se*.

One still lives within a brutal social system that can't accommodate or deliver what it is that people require. However successful therapy is, people are still disenfranchised from public life. They are alienated. Being able to come to terms with one's own personal history doesn't mean that one is blinded to the inequities in the system and the pain they cause.

An identification with and concern for the sorrows, the material difficulties, the psychic pain, the social dislocation of others is not something therapy can or should do away with. Identification with the experience of others, not in the service of finding a self, but out of a sense of having a self, is an honourable goal and not incompatible with a successful therapy.

what we all learned as daughters was the social requirements of patriarchy

So while I would argue therapy can provide us with an understanding of the psychological, it is not a renunciation of the political. But a therapy devoid of political content or stripped of its political roots is a problem.

The personal is political

What we are discovering every day in the course of our work as psychotherapists, is the profoundness of the feminist slogan – the personal is political. We have learned that our wants and desires – wants and desires that might be uncomfortable, inconvenient, out of phase with our political convictions, can be made comprehensible. We can understand them not as wants and desires we approve or disapprove of but as wants and desires that are an expression of our social existence. Our wants and desires and the various volitional and unwished for defences against our wants and desires are explicable.

What becomes increasingly evident is that people are not simply preformed atoms that interact within a social structure. Human beings are not either morally good as it is often alleged in the humanistic position, or torn between good and bad as in neo-freudian positions. Individuals are not moral categories. Rather we are coming to understand that human beings are the social structure; by which I mean that our psyches and our actions are an embodiment of social relations.

And I do not mean this in a passive sense. Human beings are not a *tabula rasa* on which history and personality are written. The psychological birth of the human infant is a social birth. And in that social birth, as the infant takes into itself the social world, it also acts on it. The taking up of subjectivity is an active process and a social phenomenon. It occurs outside the womb within culture, with the child's absorption of that culture and engagement with it in the taking up of language and consciousness – a social response and initiation within a social relationship.

Of late there have been difficult and ugly disputes between women in various work and political contexts. Some of these disputes are a healthy expression of political differences passionately felt and strenuously argued. But some of the disputes have more the character of betrayal and outrage by an apparently 'betraying' party. In some groups differences are suppressed for the group feels unable to handle them. The political or work group may continue on in a lame fashion unable to discuss the differences and unable to move forward except in the most timid way.

The sources of conflict

But what are the psychological elements to these differences that can be so wrenching and destructive that they either lie buried or destroy? What have we to learn about the psychological meaning of these disputes?

What feminism has allowed for is the recognition of how important women's relationships with one another are. In working together, in taking our relationships with each other seriously, we began to understand and honour a feminine sensibility. We began to value what other women had to give us and in turn value what we had to share with them. We recognised our longing for a community of women, our desire for love from women, for acceptance from women, for understanding from women, for approval from women. Our hunger for that love and contact fuelled much of the intensity in those relationships. Indeed the need for support and confirmation from other women was so intense that significant differences between women got ignored or buried. When those differences did surface they did so with damaging consequences.

For what we all learned as daughters were the social requirements of patriarchy. And where we learned these most intently was within a female to female relationship. What feminism has had to face, what each woman engaged in these struggles has had

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to encounter, is the brutal realisation of the hand of censorship and social control transmitted from mother to daughter.

What each woman carries inside of her, embedded in her psyche, in the very fabric of her psycho-social existence is the enabling-disabling aspects of a woman to woman relationship. What feminist therapy has been able to see in a particularly stark way is the underbelly of sisterhood, the difficulties that are now often within women's relationships.

Women coming together in work settings, in friendships, in political groups, bring with them the legacy of relating – the girdle of social mandates that framed that fundamental relationship. The longing each women has for acceptance from her mother, the longing each women has for support from her mother, the longing each woman has to change her mother's life, is entwined with the memory of hurt and of hatred for the repression she experienced within her orbit.

Disagreeable feelings

And when women meet as adults in settings of their own making, they bring a desire to remake that fundamental relationship to women and to self. They bring a desire to create a community of women who will be truly enabling. But their personal histories mean that they simultaneously stumble on their own disbelief that this can happen.

And as if that legacy weren't recipe enough for difficulty and even temporary disaster within women's organisations, there is as well the internalisation of all the taboos on female expression, also first leant in a female to female relationship. So that while feminism and a woman's community provides almost the only option for women to get out of the straightjacket of patriarchy, it can at the same time be felt psychologically as a restricting, forbidding, bad mother.

This latter meaning may not be conscious. But there seems to be sufficient evidence to suggest that women project on to each other aspects of their negative internalisations of women. In other words, they perceive one another as potentially repressive, as disapproving, as excluding.

What we are learning in the consulting room is just how difficult things can be between women at present. Just a few years ago 'right-on' feminists could barely disclose feelings of dependency or feelings of sexual jealousy, or that they were preoccupied with their bodies and their food intake, so today, slopping around women's relationships and in women-created organisations are disagreeable feelings, incomprehensible feelings, unsisterly feelings of envy, of competition, of jealousy, of anger, of betrayal, of abandonment.

Envy between women

These feelings are an inconvenience. They are threatening, they don't fit in with our political understanding and we want them to disappear. But they don't disappear and most often they aren't explored. Instead they get expressed indirectly causing tremendous hurt and havoc. Unexplored they have the capacity to severely diminish women's intimate relationships and destroy work and political groups. Women express tremendous concern for the anger, the disparaging, the fierce disappointment that they can feel towards one another. Envy is one of the most important of these unexplored feelings.

Therapy, like politics, does not take ideas or emotions at face value. The therapeutic process is the setting for the interrogation of emotional states and the conscious and unconscious ideas we hold about them. The open expression of envious feelings then is not the end point of the discussion but the *beginning*. Feminist therapy then asks what is this emotion, why does it occur in this particular context, why this particular emotion? As we grapple with envy and other painful feelings in this way, we have a chance to rehabilitate these emotions rather than to instantly judge or hate ourselves for experiencing them.

what feminism has allowed for is the recognition of how important women's relationships with one another are

And we discover that behind the experience of envy lies not the greedy, rapacious, spoiling, ungenerous destroying person that is so much the woman's experience of herself when she is gripped by envy. What we find rather is a person who is deeply conflicted about her own wants and desires, so much so that she is frightened by others' capacity to respond to their own. A woman's envy tells us that she feels unentitled, and undeserving. Envy itself is not the problem. Envy serves to immobilise her and in so doing it pinpoints her much deeper conflict about wanting.

The emergence of envy can be seen in this light as a signpost to desire; a defence if you like against women's wanting. It is not something to be suppressed as unsisterly but an emotional response that we need to pay attention to. The envy shows us the craving, the strength of desire caught up in self-repression which is projected onto others. Feelings of envy can be used as a signal to ourselves about our internal difficulties around wanting. And we can understand other women's envy of us as a sign that they haven't given up, they still want.

We can help one another with these wantings, rather than stifle the feelings of envy as though they were indeed poisonous and spoiling. When envy serves as a protection against the more profound problem of illegitimacy, we need to address that psychological legacy more directly. When tensions about such developments occur in groups, in organisations, between friends, then we face a challenge, the challenge of supporting one another, the challenge not to collapse under the envy or the guilt but to push forward, to meet the longing that feels so very foreign to us.

I have used a discussion of envy to talk both about the kinds of difficulties that can arise because of the psychological legacy we currently inherit as women, and I've been wanting to illustrate how a psychotherapy informed by feminist understanding does not simply illuminate those difficulties but helps women change in the present.

Feminist psychotherapy and an understanding of unconscious processes can help us work out what we are really scared of so that instead of repressing one another and repudiating the very real differences among us, we can more truly support each other's efforts towards self-expression.

It seems to me that we are transitional women with transitional psychologies. We haven't given up the desire to change in the present, whatever the political problems may be, and yet our psychologies often throw up enormous hurdles for us. When we discover we have problematic and difficult feelings towards other women, it doesn't mean that sisterhood is a sham, it shows rather how very deeply we have taken into ourselves, in the very making of ourselves, a femininity that embodies repression and self-hatred. We do well to remember that this is an indictment of the social structure, not a shortcoming of sisterhood. □

The article is based on the Pam Smith Memorial Lecture which the author recently gave at North London Polytechnic.

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VIEWPOINT

Constitutional Rumblings

The growth of authoritarianism under the Thatcher government has concentrated minds on the need for individual and community safeguards in law. A bill enshrining the European Convention of Human Rights has already gone through the House of Lords and is likely to be taken to the Commons, while the National Council of Civil Liberties is to initiate a major debate on the whole issue in the autumn.

The Left has traditionally been wary of a bill of rights because it could limit the sovereignty of parliament and increase the authority of an already powerful judiciary. Below, Nicola Lacey argues that the time is now right for such a bill whilst Patrick McAuslan considers that the severity of the constitutional crisis is so great that a bill of rights will not be enough to curb the power of the state or protect the rights of individuals.

NICOLA LACEY
A Bill of Rights

The Left has been too quick to dismiss the advantages to be gained by the adoption of a bill of rights. I want to consider two main questions: first, why should the Left be particularly concerned with the issue of a bill of rights at this point in our political history; and secondly, what could our own bill of rights really add to the protection of our fundamental interests over and above that already offered by our membership of the EEC and our adherence to the European Convention on Human Rights?

Since the second world war, there has been a growth in government and bureaucratic power resulting from the gradual increase in the legitimate functions of the state. Combined with political developments such as the consolidation of the party and whip systems, this has given rise to a constitutional crisis and the problem of controlling public and bureaucratic power.

The orthodox view is that powers wielded by central government and governmental and quasi-governmental organisations, and even formally private institutions such as multinational corporations, are adequately controlled by such safeguards as ministerial responsibility, parliamentary scrutiny, constitutional convention and electoral control. This view has now been seriously undermined.

Moreover, the crisis of both legitimacy and accountability in political practice has deepened since 1979 due to a political leadership which has rejected and indeed exposed the vulnerability of the consensus-orientated style of British government which supposedly ruled out the effective adoption of radical policies on either right or left.

Let's consider the consolidation of cabinet and the emergence of prime-ministerial government, increasing centralisation and the emasculation of local government (which could to some extent protect fundamental rights in areas such as housing and education), privatisation, deregulation and the rhetoric of the free market, combined with covert government involvement in matters such as Westland and clear contempt for the parliamentary process, as exhibited by the recent British Leyland issue. These testify to the fact that we are now facing an unprecedented threat to individual and community interests which we have tended to take for granted.

Apart from the electoral defeat of this government, we are faced with a longer-term problem: how to redesign our constitutional structure so as to ensure real legitimacy, accountability, openness and efficient structuring of public power for the future. No-one could claim that a bill of rights alone would achieve very great benefits in terms of increasing the accountability and fairness of government, but I would argue that *ultimately* we should assess it as part of a thorough programme of constitutional reform which might include, for example, a written constitution setting out the relative powers and responsibilities of local and central government, electoral reform, freedom of information legislation and reform of the party system to ensure more effective participation. In this context, a bill of rights might have a real impact in securing the background conditions of tolerance, security and mutual respect and freedom within which other social goals may effectively be pursued.

Turning to the European dimension, why do we need our own bill of rights in view of our membership of the EEC and our adherence to the European Convention? The answer is that the amount of EEC law relevant to human rights which is directly applicable in British courts is relatively small. Few courts would be willing to give priority to EEC legal standards, particularly if the national law was clearly intended to be inconsistent with EEC law and had been passed since our accession to the EEC.

As for the European Convention on Human Rights, the law maintains that individuals must first exhaust all their domestic remedies before taking a case to the Strasbourg court. Litigants who have little chance of winning in Britain have nevertheless to waste an enormous amount of time and money going through the British courts only to find they have no remedy in British law. The great gap between the protections offered by British law and the European Convention is illustrated by the fact that British law has been found to violate the European Convention in 12 out of the 14 cases taken to Strasbourg by British citizens.

How, then, could we go about adopting a bill of rights? Clearly the simplest solution is that sought by the latest parliamentary initiative in the House of Lords. This would incorporate into British law the European Convention, which enshrines a fairly standard list of political and civil rights including freedom and security of the person, freedom of expression, association and conscience, and freedom from discrimination on grounds of race, gender, religion, language and property.

The advantages would be that, although the Convention is framed in broad and general terms, the British courts have already had some experience of interpreting it. There also exists a substantial body of well-argued case law from the European Court of Human Rights, which would be a useful source of guidance for British courts.

But I would argue that we should go further than the European Convention, which says little about economic and social rights, such as the right to a minimum standard of subsistence whether from employment or social security. It may be true that the proper place for the adoption and enforcement of such rights is the political and not the legal process, but there would be a certain value in affirming a commit-

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ment to such goals at the constitutional level. It would be shameful for us to shy away from the problems of trying to reach consensus on a realistic set of basic economic and social rights. This should include a level of legal aid provision which would ensure real rather than theoretical access to the courts to enforce our other rights.

The experience of the last seven years has shown the British Left that the traditional constitutional safeguards against the abuse of power and the erosion of fundamental interests are no longer adequate. If we are to protect the interests of people, we must address the issue or constitutional reform and the adoption of a bill of rights. It is all too easy to be sceptical about the potency of law as an instrument for social change; but we cannot escape the fact that the law will in any case be used by the powerful. If, when we have the opportunity to do so, we fail to reform it so as to equip the disadvantaged to protect and defend themselves when that may be a necessary or effective strategy, we fail in our political duty as socialists.

PATRICK McAUSLAN
Britain's Constitutional Crisis

To understand the present situation, it is necessary to go behind the formal statements of the constitution, to the underlying principles which are supposed to influence the conduct of those exercising power.

The fundamental principle is that of limited government: this is carried out in practice by a system of local government with its own funding and a broad discretion to exercise its powers as it sees fit subject to the obligation to keep within the law; the willingness of governments to accept the occasional setback in the courts when their actions have been declared to be illegal; and governments which accept that there is a place for opposition to their policies and which are conscious that the police and security services have the potential to abuse their powers and must be subject to an effective legal regime of control and accountability.

There is overwhelming evidence that the present government has abandoned, if indeed it ever believed in, acting in accordance with the principle of limited government. Take local government: there has been a sustained assault on the powers, indeed on the very principle, of local government since 1979: on financial autonomy, on the electoral process, on the right of local governments to tell their electorate what they are doing. Even conservatives are concerned by this attack on local government and by a hostility which seems to be at its most virulent when local governments are controlled by opposition political parties.

Consider next the record of this government in keeping within the law in respect of its actions: its record is such that observers could be forgiven for assuming that it is government policy to ignore whether what it wishes to do is lawful or not.

This point has been made by Lord Justice Woolf: 'It used to be the case that if the legality of a course of action was in doubt, it was not adopted. Now it appears to be coming the case of anything is permissible unless and until it is stopped by the courts'. No wonder Lord Hailsham is so keen to stop judges speaking on 'controversial' subjects in public.

The prime minister herself set the tone with her decision to ban trade unions at GCHQ; her action was held to be illegal by the first court which considered the case because she failed to consult with the trade unions. It was only when she argued that her action was dictated by considerations of national security that the higher courts felt they had to give way. But no-one reading the judgements in the House of Lords could be left in any doubt as to what they thought of the legality or justice of the prime minister's action.

An even greater challenge to the principle of limited government is the government's willingness to use its control of parliament to force through retrospective legislation to undo the effect of adverse judicial decisions. Nothing could demonstrate this more clearly than the way in which Mr Ridley, the transport secretary, rammed through legislation to reverse a decision of the court that he had acted illegally in ordering the GLC to pay over £50m to the London Regional Transport executive without allowing the House of Commons adequate time to discuss the legislation.

Contrast his performance and that of Mr Jenkin who in 1980 did the same thing after illegally sacking the member of an area health authority. Mr Jenkin apologised several times to parliament: Mr Ridley made no apology and gave short shrift to those who suggested that he should.

Mention should also be made of the attempt to emasculate the funding of the Labour party by legislation on the political levy – rebuffed by the votes of ordinary trade unionists – as yet another example of this constitutional crisis. So is the use of the criminal law against persons and the media who attempt to expose government wrongdoing, and the uncritical support for the granting of enormously-enhanced powers to the police, already widely abusing the powers they have at present.

Faced with this approach to government, it is not surprising that people are losing faith in constitutional government and that confrontation and violence are seen as permissible ways to achieve social and economic goals. It is also the reason why there must be grave doubts as to whether a bill of rights will either alone, or in conjunction with other constitutional reforms, affect the present situation or people's perception of the crisis.

Only when the major economic, financial and commercial forces have been wrested from the government by political means will it be time to consider whether a new constitutional settlement, including a bill of rights, might be the appropriate way to ensure a truly open system of government. To go down that route now would worsen not improve the present crisis as it would hold out false hopes of betterment for the people and in fact achieve nothing of moment at all. □

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Letters

LEFT AID?

Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques (*MT* July) argue that the Left failed to recognise the importance and political potential of Live/Band/SportAid. They are right, but it could also be argued that these movements' success owes much to the fact that the Left was not organisationally involved.

They were popular, but escaped the left/right tag. The media therefore felt able to promote the events more or less freely without the constraint of political balance.

SportAid was a simple yet imaginative idea which captured popular support. Because of its essentially apolitical nature it generated pre-publicity which aided and created the build-up. Breakfast tv showed Selena Scott working out with the Beverly Sisters and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Had the event been either *or* or *with* the Left in fact or in the perception of the media, I am sure this would not have happened. People and other organisations often steer clear of CND and the peace movement because it is too political – by which they mean too left wing. This is a constant problem not of our making.

We are a genuinely broad-based organisation with concerns which surely affect everybody. It is a problem the Left would do well to think about: not which causes it gets involved in but how it does it. The batteries of newspaper sellers in the subways leading to the Anti Apartheid march or to any CND event are profoundly alienating to many people who would otherwise be sympathetic.

We can learn much both organisationally and promotionally from Band/Live/SportAid. The peace movements should be able to promote simultaneous world actions for, eg, a comprehensive test ban: so far we have failed to do so. Our marches in October 81 and 83 approached this, but lacked the universal appeal.

Geldof himself appeared to retain his integrity and principles throughout. His idea may be dismissed as naive, but he has clearly learned fast through travel, working with aid agencies and in the process of the campaign. He did not discard his denim jacket or unbrushed hair, but nor did he back down in the face of Margaret Thatcher or the UN in promoting his demands for cutting through the 'crap' of the political talking shops.

If the Left is to get involved, I hope it will learn the lessons – organisationally, promotionally and politically.

Meg Beresford, London (in a personal capacity)

UNION RULES

Helen Hague (*MT* June) suggests that the 1984 Trade Union Act stipulation that all voting members on union executives must be chosen through secret, individual membership ballots appears, from evidence so far, to be helping redress the inbalance of years of ingrained male domination.

She goes on to say that an analysis of recent elections in four unions which have changed their rules to comply with the act reveals a swing towards increased representation by women. One of the unions mentioned is my own.

I would point out that the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers has, for more than 30 years, chosen its general officers and executive board members through secret, individual membership ballots. We did not have to change our election procedures to comply with the 1984 Trade Union Act.

It is not the rule changes that have heightened the political awareness of my union's members and contributed to record involvement in our electoral procedures in recent years. Rather it is in part due to our own efforts to encourage greater involvement in the union's affairs by its members as a result of the present Tory government's concerted attack on trade unionism and working people.

Clothing workers are bearing the brunt of the government attack. More than most, they have very real reasons for putting themselves forward for and participating in their union's electoral machinery in a bid to combat the excesses of the present government.

Alec Smith, General Secretary, NUTGW

CHANGING SOUNDTRACK

A small comment on Frith and Street's excellent article on Red Wedge (*MT* June): the 'empowerment of young (cultural) producers and activists' is surely enabled by a *state* policy on pop culture which directs resources to local cultural initiatives, thus making the technology of producing and performing music more widely available.

The revenue from a blank tape levy would obviously be better spent supporting this kind of infrastructure, creating a genuinely popular and democratic music culture, rather than pouring back into the coffers of multinational music companies (as the Tories intend).

But who would redirect this levy towards a more socially useful end? An elected majority Labour government, of course (assuming Red Wedge's influence on the party manifesto is pervasive enough). The success of the GLC and Sheffield Council music projects only goes to show that good socialist pop policy is about *actual* intervention – and if you're abolished, rate-capped, *or in opposition*, your ends are limited by the *means* at your disposal.

Far better to try to copy the drum pattern on your bootlegged Janet Jackson track than buy the single, certainly – but the shift from passive consumer to active producer can only happen through a more 'enabling state'. From this angle, the expediency of Red Wedge as 'the soundtrack to an advertising campaign' for the Labour party might be its most important use – if it can 'enable' a Labour victory.

Patrick Kane, London NW5

HEIGHTENED WORRIES

The publication of the Joint Alliance Commission report (*MT* Viewpoint, July) has greatly heightened the worry of those who joined the Liberal party for its opposition to nuclear arms.

The party's opposition to an independent nuclear deterrent dates back decades and it was probably only sheer confusion at the choice of alternatives that led the 1984 Assembly to put Polaris on the negotiating table instead of scrapping it. Nevertheless the party still overwhelmingly voted against the independent deterrent concept and members won't be too pleased about leaving replacement options open.

Another major problem that will beset Steel in his attempts to get Liberals behind him is the report's ready acceptance on continuing US military involvement in Britain. The Liberal Assembly in 1984 defeated the idea of putting Cruise under 'dual key' control as a red herring.

One suspects that the continued intervention of the US in other countries' affairs and use of the British bases to stage the bombing of Tripoli will lead to English and Welsh Liberals joining their Scots counterparts in calling for the establishment of a non-nuclear European defence structure under European political control and the phasing out of US bases in Britain.

The disagreement with Dr Owen over Polaris is only the beginning of David Steel's difficulties if he insists on backing a defence report that is clearly lacking in credibility whatever side of the defence spectrum one happens to be on.

Kevin White, chair, Liberal CND

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Whisky, Absinthe and Exotic Cookies

A selection of summer reading

With Florence, Paris and Athens half empty, this summer is doubtless *the* occasion to visit the high temples of European culture rather than lounge in a beach-side café sipping absinthe and reading paperbacks. For those of you determined to see the holidays through in time-honoured manner, however, there is ample entertaining and illuminating reading-matter to keep you going.

My own reading this year has, rather morbidly but quite unintentionally, been tinged by current events. Shivering away in February, I cantered through the splendid Norman Lewis's *A Suitable Case for Corruption* (Penguin £2.95), a more than moral tale of a bungled CIA attempt to topple Gadafy. With the wise colonel now more firmly in the saddle than ever, and Reagan astride the camel struggling through the needle's eye, Lewis's wry and measured scepticism about Islamic fundamentalism should be required reading.

A month or two later, *The Construction of Nuclear Power Plants* from the consistently interesting Soviet scientific list, Mir ('peace'), was also essential reading (Progress £5.95). The densely technical text is hard, rewarding work, but there is the inevitable unfortunate paragraph which describes the RBMK-1000 reactor as 'rather popular in the USSR, used at Kursk, Chernobylsk and Smolensk . . . always ready to operate and very safe'. Technical diagrams of the Chernobylsk reactor are fascinating and in much greater detail than those available in the press at the time of the accident.

With all the brouhaha about the Spanish civil war, I re-read Hywel Francis's *Miners Against Fascism* (Lawrence & Wishart £4.95), the story of the South Wales volunteers in the International Brigades. The final 20 pages of letters home from Spain to Wales are quite extraordinary: deeply felt, politically astute and terribly moving, they knock everything by Orwell and Hemingway on the subject into a *Guardia Civil*'s tricorn hat.

Much to my delight a couple of Claud Cockburn's novels have been reissued. *Ballantyne's Folly* is a strange cross between wild farce and political satire, and also a sustained hymn of praise to the wonders of whisky, while *Beat the Devil* also misses no opportunity to propagandise for the bottle in its saga of a bunch of fortune-seekers whose journey to their El Dorado is endlessly frustrated: half-way between a Bell's advert and Buñuel, no wonder it was made into a movie with Humphrey Bogart (Hogarth £3.95 each).

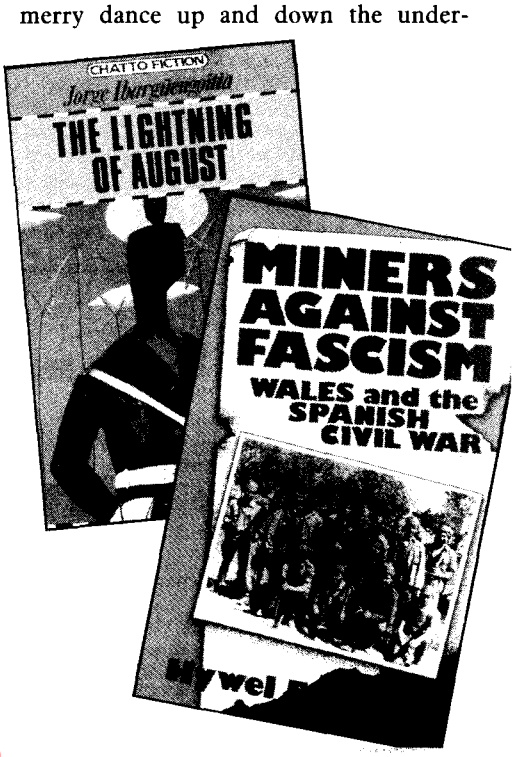
The doughty Patricia Cockburn was married to Claud for nigh-on 50 years, and led an admirably independent and free-spirited life both before and after meeting him. Her memoirs, *Figure of Eight* (Chatto & Windus £10.95), tell with Anglo-Irish brio of the Red Army in Sofia, horse-trading with tinkers and travel from Tahiti to Ruanda, all with no attempt whatsoever to rein in the humour. Recommended.

Also reissued by Hogarth is Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* (£3.95). This is a passionate and powerful argument about male power and war-mongering, about a way of life based on exclusion, tyranny, oppression. Judges, politicians, writers, 'priests and dictators': they all belong to that band of fathers and brothers whose lives – public and private – depend on the subjection of women. *Three Guineas* is violent, witty and uncompromising; drawing, as it does, analogies between St Paul and Hitler ('the virile or dominant type . . . for whose gratification a subject race or sex is essential'), it is no wonder that it elicited such responses as 'muddled' and 'preposterous' from Woolf 'experts'.

On the same theme of women, men and war, an ambitious and highly readable first novel, *Mud* by Nicky Edwards (The Women's Press £3.95). A lesbian feminist lately from Greenham Common researches a play about the first world war. Past events cast light on present choices. The issues of violence and non-violence, of individual responsibility and collective action, of men's power and women's resistance, are explored with subtlety by the humorous, likeable narrator. A very promising beginning.

Still on this topic, Rose Macaulay's novel *Non-Combatants and Others* set in the first world war, (Methuen, £3.95), shouldn't be missed. Her *Fabled Shore* (OUP £3.95) is an account of a trip down Spain's Mediterranean coast in 1949; she gets rather offended by the scores of churches burnt by the anarchists in 1936, but responds favourably to the plebeian throb of that great city, Barcelona. My favourite from her gifted pen remains the pleasantly surreal *The Towers of Trebizond* (OUP £3.95), with an ape that drives a car and goes to mass: a bad case of the wrong sort of primate at the altar.

It's certainly worth keeping an eye on the Hogarth reprints. John Hampson's classic working-class novel, *Saturday Night at the Greyhound* (£3.95) is a fast-moving drama set in a pub on the Derbyshire moors. Sexuality smoulders and cruelty is unleashed while jugs of ale are drawn and the glasses rinsed. Makes the regulars at 'The Winchester' sound like Christian CND. On the thriller front they score well too, with another Gladys Mitchell, *Laurels Are Poison* (£2.95), featuring my favourite psychoanalyst sleuth, Beatrice Adela Lestrange Bradley, leading us a merry dance up and down the under-



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REVIEWS

ground corridors of a women's teacher-training college. What would Mrs B make of Emma Victor who makes her first appearance with *She Came Too Late* by Mary Wings (The Women's Press £3.95)? In the same line of business but very 1980s, very feminist cool. I suspect she'd emit her famous cackle, and be entertained. I was.

Sometimes this torrent of reprints can get you down, but amongst the acres of tasteful Virago green I came across a wonderfully witty offering from Angela Thirkell. Her *Trooper to the Southern Cross* (£2.95) was first published under a male pseudonym and is a hilarious and perfectly observed satire on things – and especially men – Australian. Streets ahead of anything by her overrated son Colin MacInnes, it is one of Dame Edna Everage's favourite novels – read it and you'll see why.

Finally, don't be put off by the author's tongue-twisting name or the gloomy weather forecast in the title of *The Lightning of August* (Chatto & Windus £3.95). Jorge Ibargüengoitia (Melvyn to his pals) was one of Mexico's leading novelists before his death in the Madrid air disaster in 1983, and this droll exploration of the Latin American military mind, obsessed in a shambling way with conspiracies as it stumbles from one disaster to another, has a marvellously absurd logic all of its own. Goes well with absinthe and exotic cookies.

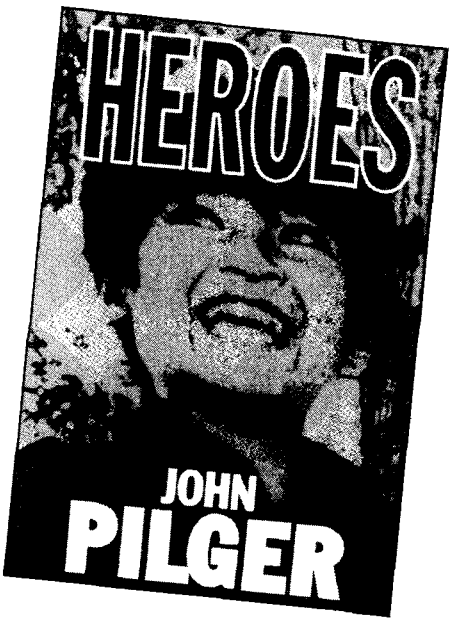
Florence Kray

An Unfinished Story

Heroes
John Pilger
Cape £12.95

It is often hard to defend the practice of journalism. The longer you do it, the less certain you are that the result merits the effort it takes. It is a profession in which the odds seem to be stacked in favour of the mediocre, the slick, the opportunistic, the unscrupulous and the downright mendacious.

Even practised with as much care and honour as the circumstances permit, the role falls short of the ideal. When a mother in El Salvador or Argentina presses a photograph of her abducted children into your hand and begs you to try to help find them, you know that at best you will only write about it. The most direct human responses are constantly betrayed by professional exigencies: the journalist who



stops to dig the victims out of the rubble and fails to get the story back to the desk on time is a professional failure. It is the journalist's role to crash in and out of other people's tragedies, snatching a photograph from the mantlepiece of a revolution, a quote from the mouth of a dying child.

It leaves a residue of rage and bad conscience, even in the most cynical. The conscience of journalists, like their notebook, fills up with images undescribed, stories unfinished, background unexplained. Perhaps this is why so many feel they carry around an unwritten book, full of subbed-out colour, spiked quotes, emotional overmatter and considered reflection on events which lack of time did not allow to surface when it was needed. The story I would have written. The one which came off and which I would like you to read again.

Is this what *Heroes* is made of? To some extent, yes. It is partly a collection of snapshots, photographs of causes embraced, with there, somewhere just off the foreground, Pilger in the act of embracing.

Pilger tells us that the purpose of the book is to pay tribute to the ordinary people whose actions make up great events, people whose heroism is obliterated by the insidious censorship of press manipulation.

The book tries to be, and in the end does not quite succeed in being, both their story and the story of the suppression of their story. It might have succeeded better had it been less of a quintessentially journalistic book, in all but its length (nearly 600 pages). It is as episodic as a journalist's notebook and, in the end, its dominant theme is the life and times of John Pilger.

Pilger has tried to be more than just the purveyor of uncomfortable news. He has, more than most, chosen to use his profession in the service of the oppressed and to avoid the ambivalence which assails even the best intentioned. He has campaigned on behalf of *Mirror* readers, raised money for Cambodian relief, has sought out and championed the oppressed from Nicaragua to Pakistan, excoriating tyrants, castigating government cruelty and hypocrisy.

He has even, on occasion, given way to the simple temptation to be a witty and perceptive journalist: his accounts of a ludicrous hovercraft journey through Africa, handing out paper underwear to the natives whilst the CIA man charted the terrain, or riding the New York subway with a bizarre gang of vigilantes, confirm his credentials as a marvellous story teller; a sneaky professional pride, one suspects, determined the inclusion of these doubtful heroes.

But as a book, *Heroes* leaves an itching sense of the unresolved. *Heroes* is three books cohabiting uneasily in one. The first is frankly autobiographical, the second the stories he has covered, the third the confrontation between Pilger journalism and the media on which it depends for its dissemination. This last makes depressing reading, culminating as it does in Maxwell's takeover of the *Mirror* and Rupert Murdoch's fortified camp at Wapping where the *Sun* and the *Sunday Times* grow increasingly undistinguishable.

Faced with this bleak landscape, Pilger slips into the journalist's vice: he moves on to the next story. Returning to the frankly autobiographical, he goes back to his native Australia, where he replenishes his optimism with the hope that the values of Aboriginal culture will one day take their place in a truly multi-racial Australia. It is not a convincing conclusion, but perhaps the story isn't over yet.

Isabel Hilton

Material Foundations

Home Ownership: A Suitable Case for Reform
Michael Ball
Shelter £3.95

Housing debates in the Labour party and on the broader Left have for too long been polarised by the issue of housing tenure.

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REVIEWS

Recent Labour governments have adopted an uncritical stance towards the growth of tax-subsidised home ownership, and have been complicit in the resulting downgrading of council housing to a second-rate 'welfare' sector – a process radically extended, of course, by Thatcherism. Their path has been eased by a left opposition which has tended to adopt a 'fundamentalist' anti-ownership position – portraying state housing as the only acceptable 'socialist' form – while refusing to deal with the practical and political consequences of such a position in a world of majority home ownership.

Michael Ball's work a decade ago, for the Conference of Socialist Economists' housing workshop, provided theoretical underpinning for the fundamentalist position. But in a succession of publications he has steadily moved towards a different stance, stated with new clarity in this booklet. 'There is,' he now argues, 'nothing inherently superior in either owning or renting, despite frequent protestations to the contrary. Because households' circumstances, experience and means vary and change over time, a guiding principle of any major housing reform in Britain should be to encourage variety and choice in the way in which people consume housing and in the associated costs.'

As a succinct statement of position on tenure advanced by Chris Holmes and I (and many other'reformists'), this could, on the face of it, hardly be bettered.

But this is unfair to Ball, who has consistently distinguished his position from ours by an emphasis on the material organisation of housing production. Behind the modes of consumption in each tenure, he argues, lies a determining 'structure of provision', embracing the ways in which each sector's housing is financed, constructed and exchanged. To open up the choice he seeks, it is this structure of provision, not merely the legal rights and fiscal subsidies attaching to housing consumption, which must change.

Eschewing the intricate debates on housing taxation and subsidies which have absorbed so many other housing analysts, Ball has therefore developed a lonely but detailed economic and institutional analysis of speculative housebuilders, building societies and the other agencies of the owner-occupied sector.

While the wealth of analysis has been impressive, however, the policy implications have been disappointingly undeveloped. In earlier, 'fundamentalist' mode, this was unsurprising – the last thing one expected from a piece in *Capital and Class* was a prescription for reform. A Shelter pamphlet, however, is a different matter, and a 10-point programme is sketched out. Included, however, are a number of extremely radical proposals – such as public ownership of all land, the replacement of building societies by 'new housing credit institutions', and publicly administered house prices – whose relation to the preceding analysis and political feasibility are virtually unexplored.

Also questionable is Ball's catastrophism. Britain's private housing market has been peculiarly buoyant, but Ball has argued for some time that a crash may be just around the corner. Maybe, maybe not – but the Left's much-needed appeal to owner-occupiers must surely be based on more positive arguments than 'there is no alternative'.

Michael Ball continues to provide a unique corrective to analyses of the housing system which exclude the conditions of production. For my money, however, he has yet to develop this insight into a convincing political strategy.

David Griffiths

Meeting the Challenge

Trade Unions – The New Reality
Pete Carter
CPGB £1.00

Peter Carter's ideas on trade unions are often controversial, particularly, though not solely, amongst communists. This should not prevent the trade union movement from thinking carefully about what he has to say.

The main thrust of argument in his pamphlet *Trade Unions – The New Reality* is concerned with persuading unions to widen their purpose beyond pay and conditions to what could be described as a broad political approach. He argues that the movement has too limited a vision, and no long-term strategy to fit into the 80s. Unions must, he says, move on to the offensive and begin to set their own agenda and develop their own moral authority.

To achieve this aim he suggests five issues around which a new strategy could be built; new technology, women and race, a general sense of community, and taking new initiatives on democracy. I can think of few trade union leaders on the Left of the movement who would disagree that these issues should form an important part of our future agenda.

Certainly, four of the largest unions – TGWU, GMBATU, NALGO and NUPE – are already moving in this direction. There are numerous examples of unions going beyond pay and conditions, the political fund ballot campaign being the most recent. The initiative to establish a Red Wedge trade union agency is another. John Edmonds' article in the June issue of *New Socialist*, and recent interviews with Rodney Bickerstaffe and Bill Morris show a range of new thinking in the unions.

Peter's formulation of a new group of forces to fill the space between the so-called hard wings of our movement – as I am sure he understands – raises more complex issues. Alignments and alliances operate at many different levels. Most unions achieve a high degree of co-operation and understanding at workplace level, and in the collective bargaining machinery, up to the highest national positions. Beyond this, unions which might seem poles apart on one particular issue will probably be co-operating on a number of others without difficulty.

Outside of the well-known vocal group on the Right of the movement there is enormous potential for a much broader group on the centre left which could increasingly influence the movement's direction. The aim should be to build and win support for progressive ideas, not to be sectarian and exclusive.

I am pleased that Peter underscores the importance of industrial struggle in his pamphlet. He is right to say 'that the survival of the unions depends on the ability to take action.' Too often, those of us who have argued for a more political trade union movement have been accused of playing down the importance of industrial action, where in fact nothing could be further from the truth.

Successful trade unionism in the 80s and beyond will depend on the unions having a wider purpose. It will also depend on using many different methods. These will range from pop concerts to industrial action; the precise combination will depend on the circumstances in which the unions find themselves. The post-Thatcher years will be an exciting and challenging time for the trade union movement. There are increasing indications that the trade unions have learned from the last seven or eight years, and can meet the challenge.

Tom Sawyer

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MARKETING THE BBC

Stuart Hood

Mrs Thatcher may not be entirely delighted with the Peacock report, which has not obliged her by imposing advertising on BBC tv or punishing in any immediate and obvious way an institution which she – and Tebbit – curiously regard as a hotbed of left wing radicalism; but if Peacock failed to meet her aims it was not for lack of trying to apply the principles of the new Toryism to broadcasting. Thus the tone of many passages in the report is thoroughly Thatcherite.

Viewers and listeners are conceived of as consumers to whom programme-makers offer wares. 'Consumer welfare' is one of the committee's main objects. The competitive market is 'a discovery mechanism' for trying out 'new and challenging ideas'. The ultimate aim of broadcasting policy should be the creation of 'a sophisticated market based on consumer sovereignty'.

There is Thatcherite distaste for the cross-subsidising of minority programmes by more popular ones. A majority of the committee proposes that if the BBC decides to privatise and sell off Radios 1 and 2 – how this is to be achieved is not spelt out – any further radio frequencies should be auctioned to the highest bidder. This is coupled with the obligatory reference to the concept of wider share ownership and 'worker-participation', which Thatcher equates with industrial democracy. In the same vein it is unanimously proposed that the IBA should put the ITV franchise contracts out to competitive tender.

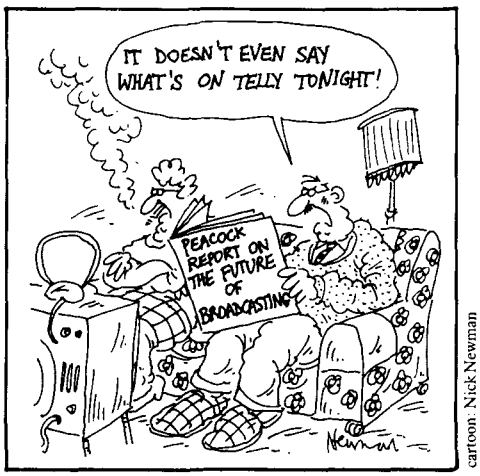
There is, too, strong support for imposing on the BBC a 40% quota of programmes supplied by independent producers – a proposal which might appear progressive but which would, in fact, mean a huge expansion of the activity generated around Channel 4 by small businesses, subject to sudden collapses, casualisation and considerable exploitation. Thatcherite too is the emphasis on technology as a solution to the problems of broadcasting and on optimistic futurology.

Where the committee is right, however, is in stating that the licence fee is a regressive tax and therefore unpopular with the public and the politicians. They have no illusions about the way in which it is used by governments as a control mechanism over the BBC's policy in 'sensitive areas' (like Northern Ireland). They are correct when they state that commercial tv (unless tempered by the kind of control the committee dislikes) is essentially an operation which sells as large an audience as possible to an advertiser using programmes as the bait.

And many will agree with their view that the IBA when making a choice between competing contractors should be required to make a full, public and detailed statement of the reasons. Some of these are points which radical critics on the Left have been making for many years; their accuracy points to one of the paradoxes of Thatcherism, which is that from time to time it runs off with the clothes which the Left thought were inalienably theirs.

If in spite of its economic orthodoxies the committee failed to deliver the goods, one answer lies in the fact that it was forced to concede that unrestricted commercial competition between a limited number of broadcasting institutions – which is what we would be likely to see until the arrival of the utopian situation in which we are suplied with an almost limitless choice of inputs – must lead inevitably to a lowering of programme standards. One after the other of the reports on broadcasting systems abroad commissioned by the committee confirms that 'the greater the amount of advertising the narrower the range of programming.'

So the decision is not to recommend the introduction of advertising on BBC tv, which will please the ITV companies, disappoint the advertising agencies and displease Mrs Thatcher – for her government is left with the old problem of having to negotiate with the BBC over the licence fee.



cartoon: Nick Newman

Standard archive-dipping on tv either celebrates silent films or mythologises them as the first comically tentative steps down a straight road where the landmarks of sound, cinemascope and colour lie waiting to be discovered. Noel Burch's series *What Do These Old Films Mean?* (Channel 4 throughout August) assembles such a fascinating hoard of material – some of it rarely seen – that its screening alone would have netted an appreciative audience.

By turning a sharp historical focus on particular moments in early cinema it does much more; careful editing and voice-over commentaries packed with well-researched detail suggest how sundry social and political forces intervened in cinema's development.

Liz Heron

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There was another important fact with which the committee had to come to terms – one that did not fit easily into a deregulatory, monetarist model: it is that viewers and listeners are not only 'consumers' but social and political beings who might place high value – as voters and citizens – on certain categories of programmes which a highly competitive commercial system, dedicated to the maximisation of audiences, has little room for eg, current affairs, documentaries, science programmes, children's programmes, programmes on the arts, programmes on controversial and minority topics.

These are all categories which the concept of public service requires should be included in the schedules and not confined to some underfunded cultural ghetto, which is their fate in American tv. Faced with this dilemma the committee comes up with the curious suggestion that, in that future when, as they envisage, we shall all be subscribers and pay-as-we-view to a diversity of competing tv services, public service programmes should be funded through an arts council of the air – the Public Service Broadcasting Council. Such a body, they suggest, would not only make such programming possible but free broadcasters from censorious regulation. This is not a view likely to be shared by those radical groups which have found themselves discriminated against by the Arts Council.

The Peacock committee hopes that the contradictions inherent in the report will be solved in an almost magical way by technological advance and in particular by subscription systems. It is uneasily aware, however, that these systems might be divisive, splitting the audience into haves and have-nots and denying to it that universality of access which is one of the foundations of public service broadcasting. It is a problem for which the committee offers no solution other than 'alterations in the tax or benefit structure or both' and the acceptance of the fact that some people will be priced out of the market.

In more general terms it does not confront the fundamental question of what a society ought to require from its broadcasting services. To what extent should they supply a forum (however inadequate) in which the issues affecting us as citizens can be publicly debated before a large audience? It is difficult to imagine that the kind of financial interests rich enough to bid for access to broadcasting frequencies in an open market would wish to waste precious air-time and money on, say, programmes debating the issue of racism in Britain, the effects of privatisation, the consequences of the development of nuclear power, or whether narrow selfishness is a sufficient basis for a good and just society. Finally, the question of how the present institutions in Britain might be reformed, democraticised, made more accountable and responsive, is one which the committee does not appear to have considered at any time.

MIND OVER BODY

Chris Savage-King

Martial Arts have been steadily gaining in popularity in the West for at least a decade. Covering everything from karate to t'ai chi, martial arts fall somewhere between sport and esoteric forms of dance.

A blurring of definitions occurs when Eastern art forms are imported for Western use, and the hint of the exotic doubtlessly accounts for their appeal, especially when taking into consideration the recent fad for all things Japanese: a craze that is rarely interested in interrogating the politics of the country from which the artefacts and customs are extracted, all being rapidly obscured by style. The degree of stylisation tends to overlook the fact that martial arts are *fighting* arts, the 'arts' element of the various styles competing with the possibly contradictory pragmatism of 'fighting'.

This can be seen more clearly if we look to what the West has to offer in this respect. Boxing and wrestling are dogmatically physical, macho sports, with heavy class connotations, quite lacking in any impulse to overcome the mind/body dualism that martial arts, in varying degrees, work with constantly. It is perhaps the element of the spiritual in martial arts that accounts for their appeal to a wider variety of participants.

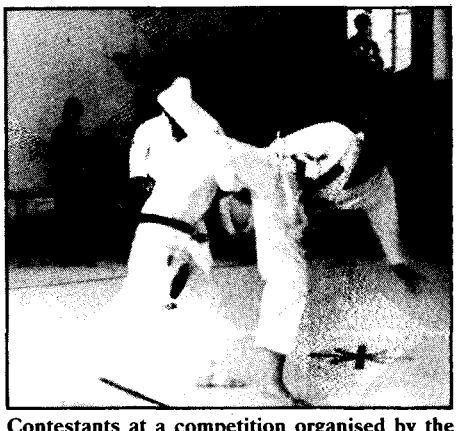
It takes at least four to five years of intensive training to become skilled in martial arts techniques, so it seems unlikely that the combative fighting aspects of the arts are necessarily to the forefront of many participants' desire to practice. A more fruitful way of examining them, therefore, might be to look at the aesthetic qualities of the various styles, and how these translate into an attitude towards participation.

Steve Gadd, a judo instructor at The Budokwai Club, the first martial arts club in Europe, typifies students in the following way: 'The men who do karate tend to be macho, keen on image, extrovert and noisy. The judo people are more down to earth. The ones who do aikido seem to operate on a different intellectual plane to the rest of us – they're much quieter and more contemplative.'

Such distinctions don't seem to be made in vain. Although karate is primarily an art of self defence (there is no first attack in karate), it is rigorously individualistic and harsh in action. The exercises are set in fixed patterns, and the punching techniques are linear, paced to a sharp stop-go rhythm. Of all the well-known martial arts, its sense of hierarchy in the dojo (training hall) is the strictest and most formalised, and participants work on their own. Judo and aikido, by contrast use partnering, and the emphasis, in terms of self-defence, is based more on a system of giving way in order to gain victory.

While karate places a stress on fast muscular power, in judo, aikido and t'ai chi the movements are softer. T'ai chi is particularly notable in this respect. The movements are slow and evasive, reminiscent of moving water, and the idea is not to approach force head on, but to neutralise the stress by dissolving it.

Martial arts magazines tend to discuss aikido and t'ai chi in terms of particularly cunning employments of technique in fighting, but their possibilities are more wide-ranging. T'ai chi has been used for medicinal purposes in China for many years, helping to overcome ailments as



Contestants at a competition organised by the Amateur Karate Association.

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diverse as arthritis, nervous tension, coronary problems and blood pressure. Its therapeutic aspects encourage attendance by a wider age of people, as it can be taken up with success at any age. The softer, more dancerly styles of t'ai and aikido attract more female participants – especially rare in karate – and many women's self-defence groups are t'ai chi or aikido-based.

But martial arts magazines available in this country, many of which are imported from the US, tend to be heavily 'fight' based, both in terms of the content of features, including much attention to competitions and pedagogic figures, and in their smaller aspects – advertisements for spiteful-looking weaponry, and series of mail order books whose titles do not inspire much confidence in the arts' claims to spiritual benefits: *Deal The First Deadly Blow, Get Even, Get Tough, Dead Clients Don't Pay* etc.

Spiritual emphasis in the arts is most recognisable in t'ai chi, where the motivating idea is to suspend the ego in order to harmonise and empathise with the environment. While this impulse now has a taint of old hippie idealism about it, it is perhaps best viewed not as an attempt to reach any kind of absolute state, but to experiment with different states of consciousness in an effort to relieve stress.

The way the spiritual drive is employed in harder and more external systems is more dubious. A recent article in *Fighting Arts International* highlighted this strain, suggesting a form of self-hypnosis to provoke in the fighter a strength wrought from hidden elemental power. Eschewing analysis or reflection, the system hopes to bring the 'instincts' under the guidance of the individual 'will' and to replace 'one positive, powerful, dominating thought for a number of competing, distracting, negative thoughts'. The ideal empathy is excluded to concentrate on a kind of ego-based transcendence holding much more in common with the spiritual appropriation of Nietschean philosophy advanced by German fascism.

Certain martial arts films have in the past offered a more socially conscious and optimistic picture, but the ideological structures have changed quite dramatically recently. An example of the former, and largely responsible for the spread of martial arts in the West, are the Bruce Lee films released in the 70s.

They have several endearing features. Lee himself is a performer of considerable charm – boyish in character with an expressive impish face, and incredibly graceful in movement. He is also one of the few male characters, in any form of adventure film, whose relationships with women are largely conceived in terms of friendship, as opposed to antagonistic lasciviousness or contempt.

The plot formulae usually revolve around the threat of Western or Japanese gangster syndicates towards a section of the Chinese community, with Lee stepping in to save the day. In the early films the focus is refreshingly ethnocentric in the 'underdog's' favour. The unassuming innocence of the Chinese is shown in sharp contrast to the glutted and excessive behaviour of the Westerners/Japanese: seen strutting around in ludicrously garish clothes, driving flash cars badly, smoking and drinking heavily, and being surrounded by geishas whom they ill-treat. The Japanese are actually implicated as decadent through their crass eagerness to embrace Western habits.

***American Ninja:* the hero, Joe, fights for himself only.**

The fight sequences in these films are run on a strict moral code. Enemies are disarmed before the fighting begins, and Lee only uses his art as a defence, sometimes of himself, but much more frequently in the service of a beleagured Chinese community. There is little fighting to the death, and enemies are almost invariably offered a chance to surrender. The films are also, in comparison to Western prototypes, extraordinarily spare in their concentration on the combat alone, quite lacking the appetite for destruction on a mass scale – of buildings, cars, bridges etc, – beloved of our own adventure films.

The current outlook in recent movies from the US is, however, quite different, and the link between boxing and martial arts becomes more obvious. The Rocky/Rambo mentality is given an exotic-come-mystical twist. The Chinese, or more often, Japanese presence recedes, being relegated to an elderly master, who turns out to be the teacher of a hero who is Caucasian, and physically built on bulging Stallonesque style: this quite in contrast to Lee's more elegant, slighter, and 'feminine' frame.

As with the common Stallone persona, the hero is marked by his facial gormlessness, lack of humour and near inarticulacy, which the audience is expected to read as signifying an elemental, instinctive form of integrity. The hero, far from defending a palpable 'community' or weaker fellow men or women, is rather fighting for himself. There is usually a 'cause' of some sort involved, but this often isn't revealed until the latter part of the movie, when the hero's strength and isolation have been stressed as their own justification.

The fight sequences make full use of all kinds of martial arts weaponry, including firearms, and show a particular relish for depictions of bloodshed, amplified sounds of necks and spines being twisted and

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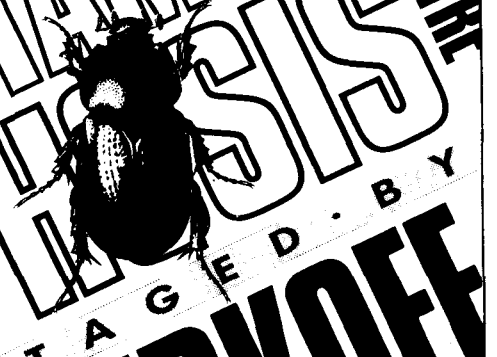

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broken, and lingering close-ups of painful deaths.

Particularly offensive is the current spate of the Ninja films eg, the highly popular *American Ninja*. The Ninjas are a medieval warrior class of Japanese assassins, supposedly extinct but resurfacing every now and again in contemporary America. Ninjas are a convenient motif to use in this respect, being archaic enough to be extremely flexible in their relocation.

The feudal aspects of their origins are forgotten so that Americans can aspire to their status by sheer dint of merit, and the clan's imposition of an iron-hard, intractable form of discipline, helpfully vague in its specific terms, is emblematic of a forcefulness and dedication that the US is thought, currently, to lack. But the message in the Ninja films is one of arrant distrust, of both enemies and purported friends. It is no longer a case of Us against Them, but one man against the world.

The practise of martial arts in the West may be seen as separate from their representation in the media, but there can be no doubt that the barbaric features of media depiction both fuel the mis-use of martial arts practice, and create a damaging set of beliefs. The use of the arts in the West may be varied and contradictory in many aspects, but such gross appropriations as appear in magazines and movies are a million miles removed from the harmony, empathy and moral prerogatives that govern the arts in their birthplaces.

CASTING OFF THE VEIL

Eileen Phillips

'With each of the men I ever knew, I was always overcome by a strong desire to lift my arm high up over my head and bring my hand smashing down on his face. Yet because I was afraid I was never able to lift my hand . . . Now my hand was no longer incapable of lifting itself high up in the air to land with violence on one of their faces . . . death and truth are similar in that they both require a great courage if one wishes to face them. And truth is like death in that it kills. When I killed I did it with truth not with a knife. That is why they are afraid and in a hurry to execute me. They do not fear my knife. It is my truth which frightens them.' (*Woman at Point Zero*, Nawal El Saadawi)

Telling the story of a woman condemned to death for killing a man, publishing the first public attack in Egypt of female circumcision (*Women and Sex*), writing her memoirs of her imprisonment under Sadat as a subversive, are all part of Egyptian writer, feminist and doctor Nawal el Saadawi's powerful and irresistible indictment of patriarchal class society.

In person she is as powerful and irresistible as in print. Meeting her in a London hotel this June was like encountering a positive energy source. She was here to launch her book *Memoirs from the Women's Prison*. She was able to negotiate with enthusiasm and apparent ease the competing demands of a friend who is in political exile, an Arab woman doctor making a documentary, women from Wages for Housework and an interviewer. Her openness to people and the world is something she understands as crucial to her writing: 'As a writer it's as if I am all the time writing in my head. I have a hunger for knowing everything, to experience everything.'

This appetite allows her to speak positively of her experience of prison, despite both its material deprivation and the numbing uncertainty about regaining her freedom. (She was in fact released when Sadat was assassinated after 'a relatively short time in prison – three months'.) She describes it as 'a very acute phase in my life, all these heights and depths of life you felt. Acute pleasure and acute pain, acute hope and acute despair – the extreme moments of life fascinate me.'

Nawal describes her political priority as organising women to defeat 'the power of men which comes mainly from the husband having political, legal power over his wife. Also the man goes out to work and gains money and usually this gives him power.' Her sense of the difficulties and contradictions facing Egyptian women is complex, involving both progress and 'a relapse backwards. With the revival of religious fundamentalism there is a pull back, putting women back in the home, veiling women. This sector is supported politically and economically by different powers.'

She sees most of the positive changes as occurring in the lives of educated women and includes herself in this category: 'I am a product of my society, an Arab woman. Sharif is married to me and we were able to create a new family with no division of labour according to sex. He gave me support when I was in jail. Some of my colleagues came out of jail and they didn't find their husbands, their husbands had divorced them.'

She stresses the importance of economic independence if women are to have control over their own lives and understands this as more easily gained by educated women: 'Change in the life of peasant women is very slow. First of all this is because they work in the fields and they work very hard but they are economically dependent. Some work and sell their own produce and have money. As long as women have women in their pockets then they can leave their husbands if they beat them.'

Nawal El Saadawi: feminist, writer and doctor.

Nawal's commitment to changing women's lives, which involves her dividing her time between Cairo and her village, Kafr Tahla, and working with the Arab Women's Solidarity Association, meshes with her commitment to socialism. But she is adamant about her refusal to subordinate women's struggle to that of the Left's. She rejects the label of marxist because: 'I hate to be labelled according to any man, Marx or Mohammed or Allah. I belong to my own thinking. I like to call myself socialist because I believe in equality.'

She is sceptical about the Left's ability to address the problem of patriarchy unless women are organising separately. 'There

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are some women who are socialist and also feminist who joined the left parties and what was then experienced? They were a minority, they were kept marginal, the party was thinking about the working class and the peasant and the class differences. They were unconscious more or less of the patriarchal problem and male domination, or they put it aside, something like 'after the revolution women's problems will be solved automatically' etc.

Her certainty about the need for autonomous women's organisations is mirrored by her insistence on the need for Egypt's political autonomy: 'I believe in self-reliance and independence of the country, in order really for Egyptian people to be strong enough to stand in front of any colonialism, neo-colonialism, any invasion, any paternalism whether it is political or ideological or economic or anything'.

'We should depend on our power, that's number one. But this does not mean that in this big jungle of politics you don't cooperate with the Soviet Union or with the socialist bloc, rather than with the capitalist bloc. But I don't like to be allied with the Soviet Union, I might say "well, the Soviet Union did this good but this bad," and I criticise the Soviet Union the same as I criticise Thatcher or Reagan.'

However, rejecting labels and refusing both personal and political dependencies which curtail her freedom to criticise are not unproblematic. Nawal sees this as involving her in never joining a political party, a position which she recognises can be criticised: 'Maybe this is wrong because politically speaking you cannot change the state without a political party. But still I'm not a politician. I'm a novelist, I'm a writer. I like to be free to break any frame. Maybe I'm very individualistic but still that's my constitution.'

It is clearly a constitution which enables her to communicate rebellion against repression in a way which takes her readers and listeners with her. Her categorisation by a repressive state as a 'subversive' is unsurprising. When asked if her fictional writing was a conscious attempt to attack and analyse women's oppression, in a similar fashion to her non-fiction, she replied: 'My fiction writing is part of my whole life. I don't sit and plan I'm going to write *Woman at Point Zero* to confirm women's oppression. No. When you write a novel it comes out of you, it comes from the unconscious and the conscious together. You don't have certain goals like when you write a study'.

'When you write a novel you don't know why you are writing, a very vague urge pushes you to write it. But the end result is that fiction serves your conviction and that's the honesty of the writing. There is no paradox or separation between fiction and non-fiction because it's all one person, they serve each other.'

Yet her strongest commitment within her writing is to fiction: 'I'll tell you something very strange. If I write successful books, studies and am not writing fiction, I become frustrated, I feel a failure. I don't feel real self-realisation except when I write fiction.'

It is hard to imagine anything stopping her pursuit of the 'dangerous truth', or to see her as ever becoming complacent about either the world or her own work. At 55, Nawal el Saawadi has all the strength of maturity mixed with the urgency we often expect to see only in the very young. She remains an inspiration.

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■ **Bookmarks,** 265 Seven Sisters Rd, N4. North London's leading socialist bookshop. Two floors of good books and pamphlets.

■ **Central Books,** 37 Grays Inn Road, WC1. Large selection of books on Marxism, Feminism, Third World, Industrial Relations, Politics, Fiction. Also a selection of second-hand books, posters, cards, badges and a mail-order service. Tel: 01-242 6166.

■ **Books on Socialism** and labour movement. 2nd hand list available for s.a.e. from Northern Herald Books, c/o 6 Edmund St., Bradford 5.

PUBLISHERS

■ **Socialist Publisher.** Cheap, professional publishing service. Author-financed booklets (poetry, political pamphlets, etc.) to a high quality. Coventry 23128.

PUBLICATIONS

■ **Radical Scotland.** Scotland's top political magazine, bi-monthly. 70p. 36pp. Socialism; radicalism; Home Rule. Annual subscriptions £5.40. From 48 The Pleasance, Edinburgh, EH8 9TJ.

SERVICES

■ **Socialist solicitor** can provide range of legal services at fair rate for his labour. Lloyd Tucker. Nottingham (0602) 256532/297463.

■ **Buzz Builders** (common ownership company). General building repairs. Free estimates. Evenings. 274 3586.

EVENTS

■ **Women Demonstrate Against Male Violence. National Demonstration and Rally for Women Only.** Saturday 26 July 1986. Assemble Speakers' Corner at 12 noon. Women from all over the country are needed to mobilise in a massive display of strength and solidarity. Speakers, crèche.
Please send donations if you can to: Network of Women, c/o Southall Black Women's Centre, Southall, Middx. Tel: 834 0578.

■ **Women's Photography and Video Open Submission.** All women are welcome to enter work.
For more information please contact: The Pavilion, 235 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 3AP. Tel: 431749. Work must be in by Sept 1, 1986.

MISCELLANEOUS

■ **Left wing pamphlets** and periodicals bought for cash. Also interested in buying libraries of left wing material. Ring 01-439 2089.

CLASSIFIED RATES

● Lineage: 30p per word
● Semi-display: £6 per column centimetre
Deadline for copy: 13th of August.
Further Enquiries and late copy: telephone Malcolm or Melanie 01-608 0265.
Send copy, with payment and stating section, to: **MT Classifieds, 16 St John St, London EC1M 4AY**
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August 8-30

EDINBURGH FRINGE FESTIVAL

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

CIRCUS SENSO

8-30 August, Pilrig Park Leith Walk, Edinburgh
Box Office: 21 market Street. Phone 031 225 5766

THE DOME

"New-wave, New-style circus. But new as the mixture is, it still encapsulates a lot of that sense of sheer wonder that is so much part of the old style circus. Extravagant punk make-up . . . wonderful shining finery . . . vivid startling colours . . . Fast and fluid and at the centre, Brian Andro a wonderfully effortless comedian" Guardian "Magnificently stylish . . . marvellous live music . . . a comedy classic. Don't miss it, seeing is believing" Time Out.

Liz Sevinka

present

GIRLS in ORBIT

"The best of women's comedy" FESTIVAL TIMES
3.00pm. Aug 11–23 (not Suns) £2.50 (£1.80)

also

COMING ON LATE
"Funny and ingenious" THE SCOTSMAN
11.15pm. Aug 14–16, 21–23 £2.50 (£1.80)
THEATRE WORKSHOP – VENUE 20
34 Hamilton Place. Tickets: 226 5425

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spare tyre company theatre

A humorous three women Cabaret – a feast of all the favourites from the past, as well as material from the new show about kids.
At Old St. Pauls Church Hall, Jeffrey St. Edinburgh Aug 11th–16th 9.45pm £3.50 (1.00)

ASSEMBLY ROOMS

DENISE BLACK AND THE KRAY SISTERS
August 8th–30th at 10pm

IVOR CUTLER
August 18th–30th at 5.45pm
Box Office: 031-226 2427/8

LMS presents

inti-illimani

25th, 26th and 27th August 9pm Tickets £5.50
and
GUITAR ENCOUNTERS
Inti-Illimani John Williams & Paco Peña
28th, 29th and 30th August 9pm
Tickets £7.50
At 'The Music Hall', Assembley Rooms, 54 George Street, Edinburgh
Tickets: 031-226 2427 or 2428.

THE HAPPY END
22-piece big band with Sarah-Jane Morris
"Ferocious, stomping swing . . . gorgeous seductive tunes – love and money, work and death, faith and exploitation" (NME)
August 18th-23rd 10.15pm
At The Elephant Tent, Zap Club, Hole in the Ground, Castle Terr.
Tickets 226 6746. Price £3.50 (3.00)

USEFUL NUMBERS FOR THE FESTIVAL

Fringe Information (10.00–7.30)	226 5257
Fringe Information (10.00–7.30)	226 5259
Fringe Club	667 2091
International Festival	226 4001
Film Festival	228 2688
Jazz Festival	557 1642
Jazz Festival	557 1548
Tourist Information	557 2727
Accommodation	557 2727
Police	311 3131
British Rail	556 2451
City Bus Information	557 4494
Edinburgh Capital Group Info Service	226 5087

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the Zap Club

PRESENTS

Georgie Fame
Tele-Men
La Bouche
Lindisfarne
Ra-Ra Zoo
Rebecca Stevens & Topo
An Evening with Time Out
Barry Sinclair
Happy End
Red Wedge
and more

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HOLE IN THE GROUND
CASTLE TERRACE
EDINBURGH

EASTERN ANGLES
Jan Farmery in **The Sister**
– a one woman show about Dorothy Wordsworth
". . . a compelling portrait . . ." (Women's Review)
Venue 64. The Caledonian Club, 32 Abercromby Place, Edinburgh.
Aug. 17th–23rd inc. 7.30pm for one hour. £2.50 (£1.90)

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Update

NEWS

NCCL Emergency Appeal Fund The NCCL has launched an appeal to save three jobs in their Women's Rights Unit. The possible redundancies are due to the end of GLC funding. Donations to NCCL Women's Rights Unit, 21 Tabard St, London N17 6NF.

Minority Rights Education Project offers a primary and secondary schools programme, advice workshop sessions, curriculum support and in-service teacher training. Contact Minority Rights Group, 29 Craven St, London WC2N 5NT, 01 930 6659.

Defend Gay's the Word Campaign HM Customs have dropped all criminal charges in the case but the campaign to change customs law continues. Contact Gay's the Word on 01 837 9456.

Invalid Care Allowance The European court recently ruled that it was in contravention of the EEC directive on equal treatment for women to be excluded from claiming invalid care allowance. The government have now conceded that they will extend the benefit to married and cohabiting women carers. For details Tel: 01 580 4827.

Marxism Today is expanding its office merchandising and design team. This expansion requires volunteer staff. Expenses will be paid and volunteers will play a full and active part in every aspect of the magazine. Phone or write to Business Manager, Jane Critchley, 16 St John St, London EC1, tel: 01 608 0265. We would like to thank Laurence Budge, Michael Butler and Peter Haydon for their help on the August issue.

Left Unlimited need volunteers and helpers to get involved in all aspects of the event. Tel: 01 251 4406 x 139.

PUBLICATIONS

Local Government Finance is a guide for councillors, trade unionists and anyone interested in understanding local government finance. Local Government Information Unit, 1-5 Bath St, London EC1V 9QQ. Tel: 01 608 1051. £2 per copy (plus 10p p&p).

Right to be Here is a campaigning guide to the immigration laws. The guide discusses why immigration laws were introduced, who is affected, what to do in an emergency relating to immigration status, and how to go about campaigning against deportation. Available from the Race Equality Policy Group, Middlesex House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Rd, London SW1.

Women The bulletin of Stirling District Council women's committee is available from Marie Kane, Women's Officer, Stirling District Council, Municipal Buildings, Stirling. Tel: 0786 79000 x 233.

School Meals in Haringey This report looks at anti-privatisation strategies in terms of pursuing radical public sector food policies which also place revaluing women's skills and the need for an anti-racist food policy at the centre along with nutrition. Available from Haringey Women's Employment Project, 1B Ringside Rd, London N22 4TE Tel: 01 889 6599.

VIDEOS

'Despite the Sun' is a 50 minute video about the printworkers dispute. It is available for hire from Tower Hamlets Arts Project, 178 Whitechapel Rd, London E1 1BJ. £20 group/trade unions, £12 individuals. Tel: 01 247 0216.

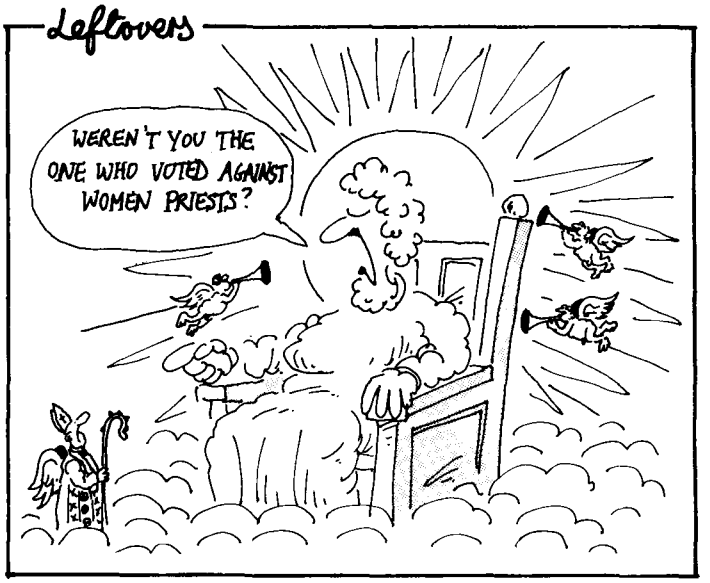
EVENTS

'Tower Blocks, Dogs Teeth and Red Hot Fire' Mark Fairnington will be exhibiting his first major one-person show of paintings and collages which depict life on a high-rise urban council estate 23 July-23 August at Pentonville Gallery, 7/9 Ferdinand St, Chalk Farm, London NW1.

Notting Hill Carnival 24-25 August, North Kensington, London.

Left Unlimited A weekend of the best in politics, culture and entertainment. Major national and international speakers. Oct 31 – Nov 2, City University, London. Organised by *Marxism Today*. For further details tel: 01 251 4406 x 139.

Mandela Speaking a tribute in song by Alan Bush will be performed at the Workers' Music Association summer school, Wortley Hall, nr. Sheffield, August 9-16. For details contact Joan Horrocks on 01 458 2321 or 250 4010.



CONFERENCES

International Media Education Conference 29-31 August at Stirling University, Scotland. For details contact Association for Media Education in Scotland, Airdrie Academy, South Commonhead Avenue, Airdrie.

Entries for the September Update should be sent to the office by August 13. For information: tel Diane Dixon on 01-965 7482 (evenings) or 608 0265 (day). Please try to ensure you state how accessible the venue is for people with disabilities.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Naomi Wayne is a member of the London District committee of the Communist party.
Brian Duffield is Vice Principal at Dunfermline College of PE.
Paul Heywood is Research Fellow at the Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies, Queen Mary College.
Bob Cant is co-editing a book on the recent history of lesbian and gay politics in Britain.
Sarah Benton is the deputy editor of the *New Statesman*.
Roger Omond is the author of *The Apartheid Handbook* (Penguin).
John Wells is a lecturer in economics at Cambridge University. He is author of *Deindustrialisation and Britain's Changing Role in the World Economy* (with Bob Rowthorn) and *Latin America at the Crossroads* (both forthcoming).
Susie Orbach is co-founder of The Women's Therapy Centre in London and author of *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. Her latest book is *Hunger Strike*.
Nicola Lacey lectures in law at New College, Oxford.
Patrick McAuslan is Professor of Law at the University of Warwick.
Florence Kray works in the wine trade and is a member of the Communist party.
Isobel Hilton is Latin American correspondent for *The Independent* a new daily newspaper to be launched in October.
David Griffiths has written widely on housing and is a former chair of the Labour Housing Group.
Tom Sawyer is Deputy General Secretary of NUPE.
Stuart Hood was Controller of Programmes at the BBC and is a freelance tv producer.
Liz Heron is a freelance writer.
Chris Savage-King is an undergraduate at Wadham College, Oxford.
Eileen Phillips is a freelance writer and edited *The Left and the Erotic*.
Cath Carroll is a music journalist.

SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY

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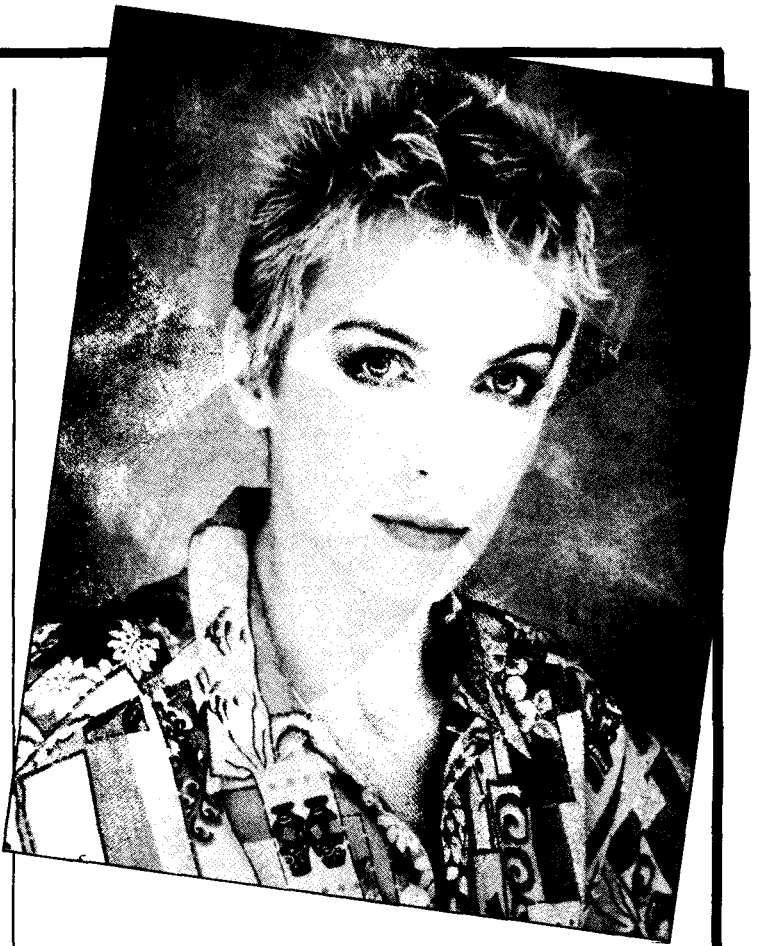
CLOSE • UP
ON

Annie Lennox

Cath Carroll



This is the story of an admirable woman who has just turned 30. A classically-trained flautist, Scottish-born Annie Lennox has survived the slings and arrows of serious dues-paying in the music biz to achieve popular acclaim as a latter-day Vesta Tilley. A star-spangled success story.

Being in a band in the early 1970s is embarrassing to look back on, especially if, like Annie, you touted yourself and flute in post-hippy, longhair bands. Then began her partnership with co-Eurythmic Dave Stewart, and The Tourists were born.

By early 1978 they had achieved the distinction of being the group most reviled, at least in London, by the music press. In a time of PVC and body piercing, The Tourists (fronted by 'zany lady' Annie) erred too much on the tacky, camp side of glamour and their songs, strong on fluid harmonies and keyboards, sounded far too serious and concerned about the quality of musicianship.

Songs like *Blind Among The Flowers* and *The Loneliest Man In The World* set a dramatic precedent for their later output, but the song that put The Tourists in the top 30 was a cover of Dusty Springfield's *I Only Want To Be With You*.

The group split. Annie and Dave found themselves floundering in a post-record deal scenario that happens oh, so often. Big debts and seemingly spent credibility. Annie Lennox has spoken of this time as a slough of consuming despond where she would lie in a bed feeling wretched.

This is why she is to be treasured as a bundle of positive energy and determination. She went one better than coming back from the dead. She came back from *The Tourists*, goddamit.

If you look to the cover of the first Eurythmics album on RCA (*In The Garden*, 1981), a point of transition for the band, you'll see strangely blurred photos. Annie has lost her shoes and looks like someone waiting for an early morning bus after an all-night party. Her face seems swollen from crying and she is holding hands with Dave Stewart. Ready for the big jump.

This time round, they sorted out the business (coyly christened 'D&A') first, and together set up a recording studio in a converted church in Crouch End. Then came the image. Dave retreated into the background, and Annie stopped looking like a left-over from Biba. She cropped her hair, sidled her lanky frame into a suit and *kerpow!*

The charm of the androgyne worked again. Annie became the sort of Ziggy Stardust you can take home to mother. Their sound became more strident and defined, and with the LP *Sweet Dreams*, they achieved a universal market crossover.

Seeing Annie perform live at this time was a vicariously exhilarating experience. She'd prowl the stage raunchily, revelling in the freedom of utility clothing, like someone who'd been let out of a cage after 10 years of confinement. Her powerful voice also found its medium and the group never looked back.

She also found the confidence to project her body in a tastefully erotic way, her archly masked features and immaculate collarbones greeting you on every street corner news-stand, and her classic bicep-flexing pose on the cover of *Touch* echoed the changing ideal for the female physique.

Muscles were coming in, but like Annie's, they were still tentative tendons, rippling across still-fragile bodies. Muscles of a ballet dancer rather than a power-lifter.

Annie, the orange-plumed 'transvestite' phoenix, had risen from the ashes of restrictive feminine fripperies and was held up as a new role model for women whose sexuality was in a state of wonder. The inevitable questions came. Was Annie gay? A lot of us kind of hoped so.

Although her affair with Dave Stewart was common knowledge (a relationship that was by now firmly platonic), maybe part of the motivation behind her transformation was her desire to *come out*.

No it wasn't. Annie stoutly denied that she was a lesbian. While this in itself was not a betrayal of her playing with ambiguous images, these lines from a later duet with Aretha Franklin, the 'feminist' anthem *Sisters Are Doing It For Themselves*, seemed an unnecessary affirmation that although women can function equally with men, they're still (but of course) heterosexual:

Now we ain't layin' plans
Cause a man still loves a woman
And a woman still loves a man.

In 1984, the tacky glamour came creeping back in, this time in an obviously self-parodying manner. For the *Whose That Girl* video, Annie appeared in many guises – in Dolly Parton wigs, reeking of Hollywood style, but also skulking about dressed as a gypsy-ish male with mischievous facial hair pencilled in.

With *Here Comes The Rain*, it was all change again, with Annie appearing as a frail, flaxen-haired Mia Farrow lookalike. One sensed that beneath the success lurked an uneasy personality. Annie was the angel playing with our hearts and minds.

Then there was the mysterious marriage to a Krishna monk, who few people actually saw. Annie was beating the classic retreat from the hurly-burly of the vile pop world and taking shelter in her inner self. Luckily, she handled it a lot better, style-wise, than The Beatles did.

The band's music became increasingly commercial, rock-orientated and mainstream. This was marked by the album *Be Yourself Tonight*, where they kicked in the jams, coming up with an overblown pastiche of Sly and The Family Stone, a long way from the mournful, psychedelic phasing of the first album.

Annie's voice had come to excel in vocal pyrotechnics, increasingly to the detriment of melody lines (as shown in the new album *Revenge*), and she became officially stadium material.

After a year, the Krishna monk couldn't take the pressure any longer and the couple were divorced. Now Annie Lennox seems to have achieved a kind of equilibrium. Her peroxide crop has grown into a chic, Grecian cap, she sports an Americanised line in glamorous sequins and black, but just you watch her as she performs in front of her all-star backing band.

The grim determination is still there and her personality retains its humane idiosyncrasy. All hail, Annie. A born fighter, not a rock star.

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THE FAR HORIZON: SOUTH AMERICA

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In association with the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign and "New Socialist" 1986 programme now available includes 17-day study tours from £798. First departures 24th July (4 weeks inc, study tour plus 2 weeks work project). The tour is fully inclusive and guided, with visits and meetings in Managua, Massaya, Esteli, Leon and Granada. Further tours (inc Trade Union Group) between July and December are in preparation, and there are opportunities to join work brigades and other specialist groups travelling with us through the N.S.C. General or special interest programmes arranged at any time for groups (min. 10 people) or on an individual basis.

CUBA

1986 programme of study and holiday tours available. Group tours including Spanish language studies for any party of 10 or more and individual tours providing initial hotel booking in Havana, plus free range internal travel or car hire can be arranged at any time. Individual tours can be arranged at any time. New charter-based tours planned to commence in November. Plus specialist ballet and film festival tours (Nov-Dec).

RUSSIAN LANGUAGE COURSES IN THE USSR

Five courses in July each year. Remaining '86 courses one-month programmes; In August, in Moscow Kalinin, Leningrad, Minsk, Kharkov and Volgograd; in August, in Moscow and Leningrad and in September at Krasnodar. Winter courses include Moscow in November/December, Leningrad over Christmas and New Year and new courses planned for Yalta for October and at Leningrad University for January and February 1987.

USSR Regional Studies. A new programme of 1-month courses is in preparation designed to combine Soviet studies in politics, economics and sociology with an optional Russian language content.

SPECIALIST TRAVEL

We specialise in organising group study tours and holidays with a purpose for student, labour movement or school groups, particularly to the USSR and Eastern Europe, Algeria, France, Italy and Cuba. Phone or write to Paco Norall or Landon Temple for details.

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PARIS

Fete de l'Humanite. 12th–15th September by coach to Paris for the great left-wing festival. Returning via Reims with a wine tasting in Champagne. £63. Special Spanish language coach arranged for the Chile Cultural Committee

SOVIET UNION

Summer Bargain in Moscow and Leningrad. 6 days in the 2 great Soviet cities, by air, 22nd–28th August for only £248 fully inclusive.

Half Term Holidays. Summer and October terms – 8 days to Moscow and Leningrad with optional education visits for teachers.

Moscow, Vladimir and Leningrad. Series of Saturday departures to Moscow returning from Leningrad on Sundays – 9 days, including November celebrations tour from £285.

Medical Exchange Programme. Two week visit for medical students 24th August–6th September, sponsored by UK–USSR Medical Exchange Programme. Details on request.

November Celebrations. 2-9th November. 69th Anniversary of the October Revolution. To see the Moscow Parade by the walls of the Kremlin with a 3-day excursion by coach to the mediaeval cities of Vladimir and Suzdal.

MARATHONS ABROAD.

A programme of marathon and other tours for runners is available, including the US-USSR Goodwill Games Marathon to which a large contingent travelled, Moscow Peace Marathon, 6th–14th August. From £365, and a projected Sahara Marathon in Algeria, 21st to 28th February.

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